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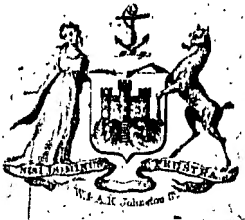

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THOMAS SIMPSON,

The Arctic Discoverer.

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THE

LIFE AND TRAVELS

OF

THOMAS SIMPSON,

THE ARCTIC DISCOVERER.

BY HIS BROTHER,

ALEXANDER SIMPSON.

MEMBRE TITULAIRE DE L'INSTITUT D'AFRIQUE.

"Though the sound of fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honour'd, but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.'

Childe Harold.

LONDON:
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Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

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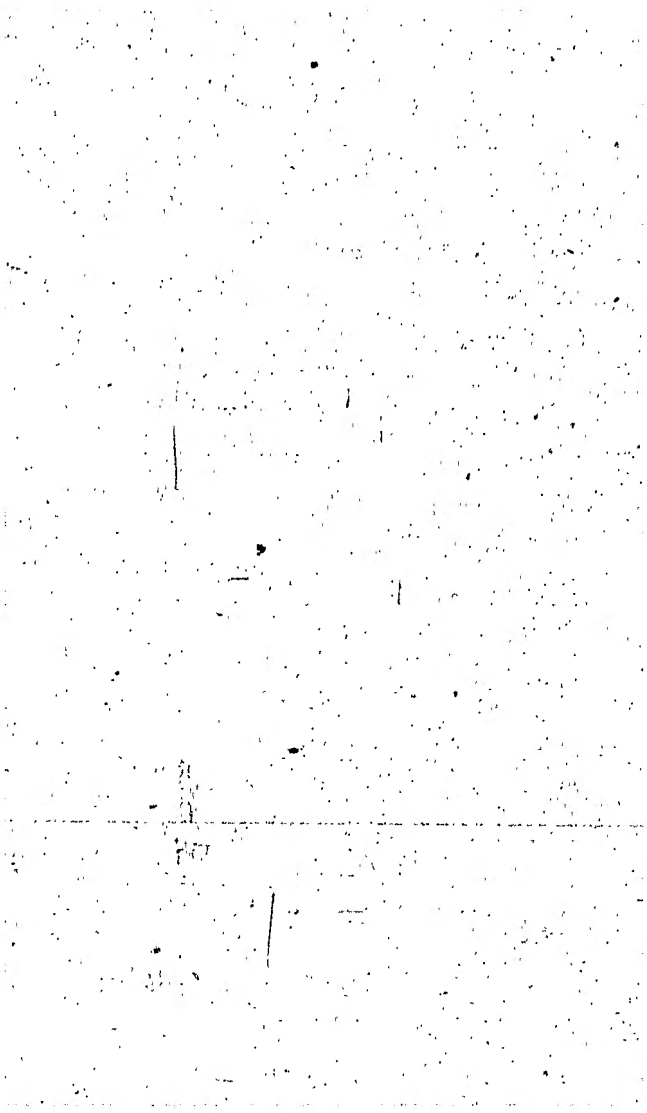
PREFACE.

THE brief sketch of my brother's life which circumstances, explained in subsequent pages, enabled me to publish along with his own narrative of Arctic Discoveries, was generally considered as but a meagre development of the history of one, "in whom the world lost no common man."

A naturally strong desire to present a more extended view of his character, his virtues, and his services, has led me to become I may more properly say the *compiler* than the Author of the following volume, which I submit to the public with a trembling anxiety, lest the intrinsic worth of my subject and materials should suffer depreciation from my inadequacy to the duty which I have undertaken.

A. S.

Ross-shire, April 1845.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Birth and Parentage.—Descent from Lord President Forbes.—The Laird of Gruinard and his Lady.—Early Character, Habits, and Training. . . . 1

CHAPTER II.

Studies for Four Winters at King's College, Aberdeen.—Description of the Mode of Living there: its advantages.—Advice to other Students.—Carries off the first Prize at Conclusion of his Studies.—Youthful Habits, Tastes, and Opinions. 11

CHAPTER III.

Addresses to his Fellow-Students. "On the Breaking up of his first Session at the University."—"On the Advantages to be derived from the Study of Metaphysics." 23

CHAPTER IV.

Connexion with the Governor of Hudson's Bay.—His Career.—Refuses in 1825, and consents in 1828 to go to Hudson's Bay.—Reasons for abandoning Study for the Church, and for going to America, detailed in a Letter to his eldest Brother.—Occupations, Summer 1828.—Letter to the Author.—Sails for America. 44

CHAPTER V.

PAGE

Arrival in America.—Travels during Summer 1829.—Light Canoes.—Canadian Voyageurs: their Habits and Songs.—A Winter in Canada.—L'Ame de Glace.—Journey to the North-west.—A troublesome Charge.—Extracts from Letters to the Author.—A *pleasant* Residence. 57

CHAPTER VI.

A Winter Journey of seven hundred Miles.—Life in the Woods.—Red River Colony.—Letter to the Author on the Death of our eldest Brother.—Sketches of Character. 71

CHAPTER VII.

Description of Red River Colony.—Letters to the Author. 85

CHAPTER VIII.

Extracts from Letters to the Author.—Difficulties with Half-breed Natives.—Intercourse with the Author.—Captain Back's Arctic Expedition. 95

CHAPTER IX.

Progress of Exploration of the Northern Parts of America.—Summary of Journeys to the Arctic Coast of America, viz., Hearne's to the Mouth of the Coppermine River.—Mackenzie's Descent to the Arctic Ocean.—Franklin's First Expedition.—Franklin's Second Expedition.—Ross's Expedition to Prince Regent's Inlet.—Back's Expedition in Search of Ross.—Back's intended Survey from Wager River.—King's contemplated Expedition.—What had been done, and what remained to be done. 109

CHAPTER X.

PAGE

Organization of an Expedition for Arctic Discovery by the Hudson's Bay Company.—Their Reasons for this Step.—My Brother called upon to plan the Expedition.—Plans for Arctic Discovery which he drew up. —"Instructions" founded thereon.—Teaching in Astronomy. — Deficiency of Instruments, and Comments thereon. 176

CHAPTER XI.

A Winter Journey of One Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy-seven Miles from Red River to Athabasca. —Northern Squatters.—A Frontier Fortalice.—Pemican. —An Octogenarian.—The Secret of Travelling in the Far North. 194

CHAPTER XII.

Reasons for the Author's Preference of his Brother's Correspondence to his Narrative.—Preliminary Arrangements of the Expedition.—Feelings on entering on Arctic Discovery. 215

CHAPTER XIII.

Expedition from Mackenzie's River to Point Barrow. —Summer 1837.—Letters to the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, Governor Simpson, and the Author. —Opinions of the Press in regard to the Expedition's first Operations. 229

CHAPTER XIV.

Transactions, Autumn 1837 to Spring 1838, detailed in Letters.—Climate of Fort Confidence.—Housekeeping there. 263

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE

Expedition of 1838 to the Eastward of the Coppermine River.—Its Comparative Failure.—My Brother's Opinions thereon, detailed in his Letters.—Opinions of the English Press, and the Public. . . 287

CHAPTER XVI.

Winter 1838-39.—Preparations for a renewed Arctic Voyage.—Instructions to the Reserve.—Last Will.—Completely Successful Expedition of Summer 1839.—Return to Red River Colony. . . . 307

CHAPTER XVII.

Schemes for a renewed Expedition.—Their Reception by Governor Simpson; by the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company. 331

CHAPTER XVIII.

Letters written to the Author from Red River Colony.—Departs for England, viâ the Prairies.—"Last scene of all."—Depositions of the Survivors, and Observations thereon.—Appearance.—Character. . . . 345

CHAPTER XIX.

The Rewards of Service.—The Author's Correspondence with Sir Robert Peel, Bart.—Sir John Barrow, Bart.—The Hudson's Bay Company.—Sir George Simpson. 374

Postscript on Arctic Discovery. . . . 397

The Indians of Northern America.—An Inquiry into their Character.—Their Condition. . . . 403

Map of the Country North of ATHABASCA LAKE,

Traversed by the different Arctic Expeditions.

English Miles

London. Richard Bentley. 1845.

THE

LIFE AND TRAVELS

OF

THOMAS SIMPSON.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Parentage.—Descent from Lord President Forbes.—The Laird of Gruinard and his Lady.—Early Character, Habits, and Training.

ALEXANDER SIMPSON—the father of him whose Life and Travels it will be to me "a labour of love" to narrate in the following pages—was the second son of a tenant farmer in Aberdeenshire; and was born at New Craig, in that county, in the year 1751. Having acquired a fair share of the education which the parochial schools of Scotland so cheaply afford, he entered, in the year 1768, on the usual course of study for probationers of the Kirk of Scotland, at King's College, Aberdeen—the same venerable and use-

ful institution at which his son prosecuted his studies nearly sixty years afterwards.

Having passed the allotted term of four years in those studies, he was obliged to provide for his support by the labours of tuition: and these became his permanent occupation; for, although he meditated, long after he commenced them, an entrance into the ministry, he never accomplished his purpose; and finally settled down as master of the parochial school of the little burgh of Dingwall, in Ross-shire.

In 1784 he married the daughter of a respectable farmer in Inverness-shire, where he had for some time resided. By her he had several children; none of whom survived through childhood, except two sons; John, who died in 1813, a lieutenant in the 78th regiment, and Æmilius, a lieutenant in the royal navy,—to whom I shall hereafter advert,—who died in 1831.

His first wife dying in 1792, he remained a widower for upwards of fifteen years; during fourteen of which, he often afterwards avowed, that he daily prayed to God to give him Mary Simpson (our mother) for his wife. At length his prayer was granted; his suit successful.

She still lives; and has attained the age of seventy-six, with unimpaired faculties. A sound constitution, and good spirits, but, above all,

a profound reliance on the unerring wisdom of the decrees of Providence, have carried her through an affliction, the extent and severity of which can only be known to one "who has been in bitterness for her first-born."

Her father was the Reverend Thomas Simpson, for many years clergyman of the parish of Avoch, in Ross-shire. The stipend of Avoch was then a poor one; the manse ruinous; and the means of local education for his children very defective. He had opportunities of bettering his position by a translation to another parish; but he declined leaving his old and attached flock. "They had accepted him (he said) as their pastor: he had promised to be their spiritual shepherd; and no worldly motives would induce him to break this sacred tie." With—as we may judge from this sacrifice—much of the singlemindedness of the worthy "Vicar of Wakefield," he did not accord with *his* views of the duty of *monogamy* for the clergy.

His *second* wife (our grandmother) was a descendant of Duncan Forbes, the celebrated Lord President of the Court of Session, — in this wise:—

The astute lawyer and sagacious statesman,—to whom Protestantism and the House of Brunswick owed so much,—was, "in his days of youth-

ful prime," to the full as reckless and dissipated as young lawyers were [are?] prone to be.

There was

"A maid, whose folly *did* confide
In him who made her not his bride."

A daughter was the result of this illicit connexion. The mother was of good family: the *affair* was kept secret, and she afterwards married a North Country Laird. The daughter grew up a very beautiful woman; and her father bestowed on her every advantage of education, training and introduction into society, that his wealth and high position could command. Before she had completed her eighteenth year, she singled out, from among her numerous suitors, the Laird of Gruinard, a scion of the noble house of Seaforth. The laird was, "by 'r lady, inclining to threescore," a widower, and the father of twenty children by his first wife; but he was still a hale, handsome, gay and gallant highlander, and Miss Forbes overlooked or forgot the disparity of years. She accompanied him to his estate, in the wildest and most remote district of Rossshire; was the happy mother of twelve children,*

* Our grandmother was one of these. Of the thirty-two children who blessed the household of the Laird of Gruinard, twenty-nine or thirty grew up to maturity. I was present, in 1822, at the interment of the last of them, Mrs. Mackenzie

and accommodated herself admirably to the position in which she was placed. Forgetting the gaieties of Edinburgh, she devoted herself heart and soul to the duties of her new and embarrassing situation; was a kind and dutiful step-mother to her husband's first numerous family; acquired in a short time the language, and became acquainted with the character, habits, and feelings of his tenantry, and was one of the first to expound to them the Scriptures in their native language:—Gaelic Bibles were unknown in these days in the wilds of Lochbroom. I love to dwell on the character of the "Lady of Gruinard;" I see in it many points of resemblance, in its energy, its enthusiasm, and self-devotion, to that of him whose labours I am to chronicle.

The marriage of our parents took place in 1807. On the 2nd July 1808, Thomas, the subject of this Memoir, was born; followed, nearly three years after by the writer, the youngest and now the only survivor of his father's family.

of Hilton, who died at the good ripe age of ninety-six. The descendants of this patriarchal family are, it will easily be believed, very numerous; and they were long tacitly permitted a singular immunity, now happily falling into desuetude and oblivion. If any of them committed a breach of the seventh commandment, people shrugged their shoulders and said, "'Tis no wonder—he's one of the Gruinards."

Our father's position, as schoolmaster of the little Burgh, did not prevent his taking an active share in its local government; for upwards of thirty years he was a member of its corporation, and was frequently its principal resident magistrate (Bailie). The prevailing politics of the county and burgh were strongly tory; yet he was ever a staunch whig of the old school, *i. e.*, he considered that the powers of government (national and local) should be exercised for the benefit of the *many*, but vested in the hands of the *few*.

His income, from his school and other employments, was very limited; yet he was ever kind and hospitable, particularly to young men who were struggling, as he himself had struggled, not only for the means of support, but also of preparation for the office of the ministry; an office which is filled in Scotland, perhaps, oftener than in any other country in the world, by persons born among the class of handicraftsmen and peasants. He was, indeed, a very Nathaniel, a man without guile.

"He had a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity."

A true and sincere Christian, he was utterly devoid of sourness and illiberality; he blamed

no man for his creed; but inculcated in the minds of his children the belief, that the all-seeing God is also just and beneficent, and that he will judge his creatures solely by the use which they have made of the faculties, talents, and opportunities, given to them.

With his children his intercourse was most endearing. Harshness or severity he never showed; but instilled his precepts by mild admonitions and by entertaining illustrations. I yet remember many incidents connected with this delightful and most profitable intercouse. On my brother's mind, from his more advanced years, it must have made a deeper impression, and, doubtless, had much influence in the formation of his character.

Our father died in 1821. His income was too small to have allowed his laying up any store; and the only provision for his family was an annuity to our mother of twenty-five pounds, in that excellent institution "The Schoolmasters' Widows' Fund," which he secured by annual life payments. Our brother Æmilius generously joined his lieutenant's half-pay to his step-mother's slender provision; and cheerfully took a share of the little cottage which she occupied.

He was, as this noble action shows, a man of warm affections; but the exclusion, caused by

the want of interest, from active employment in the service (the naval) which he idolized, and other disappointments, had soured his temper; he was naturally irascible, and a strong admirer of what is known by men-of-wars-men as "tight discipline;" the exercise of which had long a depressing effect on my brother's mind.

The child is not always father to the man. The enthusiastic and energetic traveller, whose physical conformation set fatigue and privation at defiance, whose courage and enthusiasm enabled him to bring to a successful completion the arduous expedition which he himself had planned—a success which made him only desirous of entering on renewed labours—was, in childhood and early youth, weak and sickly in physical, and timid in mental constitution.

He had early shown a strong tendency to consumption, to guard against which required, for several years, much care and assiduous attention to his clothing and diet: and, instead of his character being marked by the youthful recklessness which might naturally be supposed to have been the foreshadowing of his subsequent well-regulated daring, he was singular for a want of interest in the games common among boys—for an unwillingness to join in their rougher sports, and for a hesitation in enter-

ing upon any exercise or amusement that could in the least expose him to personal danger. For instance, although most of his school-fellows were bold and expert swimmers, he had not sufficient self-confidence, while a boy, to acquire any proficiency in that useful art; and, even in manhood, when fearlessly exposing himself to the hazards of the impetuous rapids of the Coppermine, and the imminent dangers of Arctic navigation, he had acquired but little skill in it.

During childhood and boyhood he was distinguished by a quiet docile temper, habits of strict order and method, and by a steady constant attention to his studies, rather than by any remarkable quickness in mastering them. The better part of these characteristics remained with him during his too short career; but his intellect was rapidly strengthened and sharpened by emulation and contact with other minds; while his spirit cast off the timidity which weighed it down, as his body cast off its youthful infirmities.

Even from childhood there was a strong feeling of enthusiasm, almost amounting to romance, governing him. His mind was not more bent in youth on the acquisition of university honours, than it was in childhood on the proper management of the little square of flower garden, which his father considerately apportioned as his own,

"whereof he might make a kirk or a mill."* He was not more earnest, in his early manhood, in his search after the north-west passage, than he was in boyhood in his endeavours to win the smiles of his dancing-school partner. Byron's passion, while yet in "shorts," for his Aberdeen playmate, has been thought to be, in some degree, a creation of his imagination. I can still recollect the pains, the tribulations, and the anxieties caused to my brother, by his love for a little missie not yet in her teens.

An aspiration after the noble and the generous also arose early in his mind, and it grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength. A favourite and often repeated quotation from Horace was "*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.*" In repeating this to me, who then, as now, "knew small Latin and no Greek," he always explained that the poet's meaning and his own implied only a contempt for the low pursuits, sordid desires, and grovelling habits of the vulgar herd, not a hatred of his fellow-men of any class or degree.

* The Scottish phrase for the Duke of Newcastle's aphorism—"I can do what I like with my own."

CHAPTER II.

Studies for Four Winters at King's College, Aberdeen.—Description of the Mode of Living there: its advantages.—Advice to other Students.—Carries off the first Prize at conclusion of his Studies.—Youthful Habits, Tastes, and Opinions.

With such youthful characteristics as those which I have described (characteristics coinciding in a remarkable degree with those which belonged to the boyhood of Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller), it will appear natural that my brother should have excited much interest, and raised sanguine expectations of his future success, in every one connected or acquainted with him.

The sphere chosen as that for which he should be educated and trained was the Kirk of Scotland. We shall in the sequel find his own feelings and opinions in regard to this choice candidly explained.

In pursuance of this scheme of education, he was sent in the autumn of 1824 to King's College, Aberdeen.

Before describing his progress at this northern institution, it will be interesting, as affording an insight into the system of education and course of life of students there, to peruse a Memorandum on the subject, which he himself drew up in 1829, for the information of a friend who was anxious to select a fit place for the education of younger brothers.

"Of the various Scotch universities, that which I consider the most eligible for completing a young man's education is the 'King's College' of Aberdeen. This opinion is not the effect of prejudice, but is founded upon various considerations, the most important of which are the following:—

"1st. The strict surveillance which the Professors have over both the public and private conduct of the young men under their charge. In point of numbers, indeed, this university ranks second only to that of Edinburgh; but the college being situated in what is called the 'Old Town,' a small place at the distance of a mile from the city, the lodgings of the students are necessarily condensed within a very small compass, affording the Professors an opportunity of knowing the young men individually, and of observing their behaviour and character. No impropriety or irregularity can, therefore, escape

observation; whereas, the other universities (with the exception of St. Andrew's, which is a great resort for young men of rank and fortune) being situated amid large and populous cities, the young men are scattered in every direction, unknown to their teachers save by name, under little controul, and exposed to many temptations.

"2nd. The admirable method now pursued at this university, where, besides a variety of examinations which ensure application and afford ample room for the display of merit, there are a great number of prizes given annually in every class; and at a public competition which takes place a week before the meeting of college, there are a number of bursaries from twenty pounds per annum, (*i. e.* for the four years,) downwards, awarded to the best writers of the Latin language; and I have known many young men support themselves in this way without costing their friends a shilling.

"3rd. The economy in the mode of living at this university. Aberdeen, from local causes, is generally allowed to be one of the cheapest places in Scotland. The usual, and unquestionably the best, way for going to work is this:—Two young men club together to take, say a small sitting-room and bed closet, or more frequently only a good bedroom, at a certain set

rent; the landlady procures all kinds of stores, provisions, &c., for which they reimburse her weekly; while for cooking, washing, &c., there are regular charges; so that, after the first week, the whole is plain sailing. By this means the whole average expense for the winter does not exceed from twenty to twenty-five pounds; and I should consider thirty pounds per session as a very handsome allowance.

"See the following abstract, the charges in which are stated at considerably beyond the average.

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
"Lodgings per Session, divided between two, 4 guineas	2	2	0
Cooking, brushing shoes, and washing for 21 weeks, at 2*s.* per week	2	2	0
Expense of board per week each, 7*s.*	7	7	0
College fees at an average	5	5	0
Books and stationery	2	2	0
A suit of Clothes	7	0	0
Pocket money	4	2	0
	£30	0	0*

* While recommending this limit, he

"*Did* not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show us the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own read."

for I have before me a record of his own sessional expenses,

"The course of study is as follows :—

"*First year.*—1, Greek; 2, Latin.

"*Second year.*—1, Mathematics; 2, Natural History and Chemistry; 3, Greek; 4, Latin.

"*Third year.*—1, Natural Philosophy and higher Mathematics; 2, Greek; 3, Latin.

"*Fourth year.*—1, Moral Philosophy and Logic; 2, Greek; 3, Latin.

"If these observations from one who speaks from experience be sufficient to induce you to send your brothers to this university, I have only two advices to give them, viz., to keep clear of bad company; and to make a point of performing every exercise themselves, without trusting, in any shape, to the assistance of others."

Different, indeed, the life and habits of the

and I find them respectively to amount to *23l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*, *28l.* 9*s.* 4*d.*, *25l.* 1*s*, 6*d.*, *28l.* 2*s.* 3*d.* "'Tis sixty years since," explains many things; his father's expenses at the same university, of which I have no less correct a record, never exceeded the sum of ten pound per annum.

The following is an abstract of my brother's expenses from

1st November, 1824, to 1st April, 1825.	*l.*	*s.*	*d.*
Travelling expenses to and from Aberdeen	3	7	4
Board, lodging, coal, and candle	8	1	1
Clothing, including college gown	8	3	6
College fees, books and stationery	2	17	3
Washing, postages, and amusements	1	6	7
	£23	15	9

self-denying Aberdeen student, into which this paper gives no little insight, from those of the gay under-graduates of the lordly universities of Cambridge and Oxford, of whose studies a recent grave Mentor,* describes the geological *riding* lectures of Buckland and Sedgwick to be a strictly regular portion; while he rates the concert, the ball, the cricket-match, the boat-race, the flower-show, the private luncheon party, and the public dinner, as agreeable interruptions to the routine of academic studies; nay, from whom the "*pink*" hunting-coat peeping out from under the college-gown, horn-blowing, and tandem-driving draw forth no very stern rebuke!

Many a parent's aching heart would be comforted! many a family's ruin averted! many a young man, whose energies have been prostrated, and joys embittered by the *incubus* of debts incurred while keeping up to the usual mark of college *life*, would have ran a course of prosperous and happy exertion, (!—) were the ordinary expenses at Oxford and Cambridge but tenfold the amount which my brother points out as the *maximum* necessary at the northern *alma mater*, to which he owed his own education and training.

* See an elaborate article in The Quarterly Review for December, 1843, which attracted much attention, and excited much discussion.

My brother, on joining the university, was a competitor for the bursaries, to which he alludes in the foregoing paper: he obtained one, though of the lowest class; yet even this was of advantage to him, as it diminished the amount of his college fees—bursars having a right to certain deductions from the usual scale.

He was, from his first entrance, extremely attentive to all his studies: and the exertion necessary to enable him to keep pace with his fellow-students in classical acquirements, for which he had no strong natural bent, had a most beneficial effect in calling forth his latent energies of mind. This, again, reacted on his bodily frame. He returned from his winter studies quite a new being; his mind aroused to a consciousness of its strength, his spirits exuberant, and his bodily frame already showing indications of the muscular symmetry which marked his manhood. A summer ramble among the wild hills of Lochbroom *clenched* this auspicious change.

His next session at the university tended still more to expand his character. The main branch of this winter's study was mathematics, for which his mind had a particular bias: and in it he out-stripped all his fellow-students. His earnest application to this study may be judged from a

fact communicated to me by his *chum*, that each *morning*, ere he retired to rest, his room was thronged by his class-fellows, who, after a night of slumber, came to him to beg or borrow his solution of the Professor's puzzling problems, which (as we have seen he recommended to others) he, himself, never omitted working out.

He also took a prominent part in the debating society, established by the students among themselves, and was the recognized leader of the *highland* party of his class—between which, and the *lowland* section, the "Saxons," there existed no little jealousy. His own descent was, undoubtedly, almost exclusively from those Saxons; and, although born within sight of Ben Nevis, the hugest of Scottish mountains, he spoke but little, and that very imperfect, Gaelic; yet he had a keen feeling for the scenery of his native district; and, in his addresses before the society, he frequently made triumphant comparisons between the proud feelings instilled into the mind of a highlander by a constant contemplation of the grand and romantic scenery of the mountains, and the plodding stolidity of the inhabitants of the lowlands.

Several of these addresses, carefully written out, now lie before me. That I should consider them marked by high merit may be the result of

natural partiality. In the next chapter, I give entire and unaltered, one delivered to his fellow-students on the breaking up of his first session at the university, and another "On the advantages to be derived from the study of Metaphysics," which was delivered, in November 1827, on the opening of the session, during which that science was the particular branch of study. The first is a juvenile performance, but marked by strong characteristic traits; in the last will be found indications of the concision and simplicity of style, joined to earnest truthfulness, which so strongly mark his letters and narratives, quoted in the following pages.

During the sessions of 1826-27 and 1827-28, he pursued his studies with even increased ardour. In physical sciences he was the *facile princeps* of his fellow-students; but in classical acquirements he had one or two equals, if not superiors; and on their comparative progress in Metaphysical studies (those belonging to the last session) depended the decision of the learned Professors as to the fit recipient of the "Huttonian" prize, the highest reward of literary merit given in the university, being that bestowed on him who has made the greatest proficiency in all the branches of study forming its *Curriculum*. This distinction was, at the conclusion of his

Collegiate course, conferred upon him by an unanimous vote of the *Senatus Academicus.** At the same time, he received his degree of "Master of Arts."

The session at Aberdeen commences with November, and ends with April. After the breaking up of the classes, it was my brother's annual custom to take a ramble, for five or six weeks, through Aberdeen and Banff Shires, where he had many friends and relatives. To this succeeded two or three months of hard study: and, in the autumn, we visited together an uncle residing in Lochbroom, where we spent a happy month in the sports and exercises of that wild and remote highland district. Then, again, came a short interval of study: and it was time for

* "King's College, 24th Jan., 1829.

"We, the undersigned, hereby certify that Mr. Thomas Simpson having gained a bursary at the public competition in session 1824–25, entered the Greek class in said year, and gave regular attendance at this University during that and three subsequent sessions; that during the whole of his course he was distinguished for good conduct, diligence, and ability; and that at the close of session 1827–28 he was unanimously declared the successful candidate for the Huttonian Prize, the highest reward of literary merit given in this University.

"Hugh Macpherson, *Sub-Prefect.*
"William Paul, *Prof. of Nat. Phil.*
"J. Tulloch, *Prof. of Math.*
"Hercules Scott, *Phil. Mor. Prof.*"

him to join his classes. This he did with health and spirits, which enabled him to pass through the winter's hard study, with no more serious result, than that his countenance became somewhat

"Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

My brother's appearance was prepossessing; his manners engaging; he was particular to a nicety in his dress—which was always chosen with much taste, and most sedulously taken care of. His spirits were buoyant, and his zest for society keen; no wonder, then, that he was every where a favourite. Even when most closely attentive to his studies, he mixed a good deal, not only in the limited society of the venerable Old Town—consisting principally of the families of the professors—but also in that of the bustling New Town of Aberdeen.

He had always a strong *penchant* for ladies' society; was a special favourite among them; and returned this favour by the highest—most romantic—idealization of women. He often told me that he considered a beautiful woman (and he was apt to invest many plain ones with an attribute which did not belong to them) as too ethereal a being to allow of a sensual thought being raised by the contemplation of her: that it pained him to see such an one

condescending to the sublunary enjoyments of eating and drinking, still worse of gossiping. The woman of his youthful imaginings would, indeed, have been

"too wise and good
For human nature's daily food—"

and, although an impetuous temperament may, in after life, have made him sometimes to "gang a' kenning wrong," in a country where female virtue is almost unknown, he ever nourished and retained in his "heart of hearts," the highest opinion of female excellence.

A belief in the sublime doctrines of Christianity, which was early and carefully instilled into his mind by his revered father, remained ever firm and unshaken: and his humble confidence in the guidance and protection of Providence breathes forth in every letter which he wrote, while engaged in his arduous and perilous journeyings.

CHAPTER III.

Addresses to his Fellow-Students. "On the breaking up of his first Session at the University."—"On the Advantages to be derived from the Study of Metaphysics."

ON THE BREAKING UP OF HIS FIRST SESSION AT THE UNIVERSITY, MARCH, 1825.

"THE day of our parting draws on apace; a parting which, to some of us, may perhaps be the last. This, my dear friends, is a melancholy thought; and at such a time as this it is natural for us to indulge in grief.

"Youth is the season when the disposition is frank and open: when the mind is most apt to receive impressions of friendship, and when a parting of this kind will be most deeply felt. It is in youth that friendships are contracted, which time or distance cannot dissolve; and as a great part of our happiness depends on the connexions which we form with others, it is of high importance that we acquire betimes the temper and the manners which will render such connexions endearing.

"Let us remember that our characters are just forming; that our fate is, in a manner, put into our own hands. Our affections are yet vigorous and true; evil habits and prejudices have not yet established over them a baneful sway; nor has the world had time to contract and debase the finer emotions of the soul. Whatever impulse, therefore, we now give to our desires and passions, the direction is likely to continue, and to form the channel in which our life is to run. 'Virtuous youth,' says an eloquent writer, 'gradually brings forward accomplished and flourishing manhood; and such manhood passes of itself, without uneasiness, into respectable and tranquil old age. But when Nature is turned out of its regular course, disorder takes place in the moral, just as in the vegetable world. If the spring put forth no blossoms, in the summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit; so if youth be trifled away without improvement, manhood will be contemptible, and old age miserable.' Now, therefore, that we are just setting out on the stage of life—before we have committed any fatal or irretrievable errors—what can be of more importance to us than to regulate our plan of conduct with the most serious attention? Let not the season of youth be with us, barren of the improvement so essential to our happiness and

respectability in life! If at this critical season, when our character is about to receive its stamp, we deliver ourselves up to idleness and sloth, or devote ourselves wholly to the pursuit of pleasure and amusement, what can we expect to follow from such beginnings?

"All of us would, doubtless, wish to rise to eminence in the different pursuits and occupations to which our inclinations tend, which our circumstances have suggested, or which our friends have proposed to us; but the least consideration must convince us that, in order to pursue any plan of life, whatever, with advantage, some previous discipline and preparation are indispensably necessary. And shall we attain success without that preparation, and escape dangers without that caution, which is required of others? Shall virtue and happiness grow up to us of their own accord, and solicit our acceptance, when to the rest of mankind they are the fruits of long cultivation, and the acquisitions of labour and care? Let us not deceive ourselves with such arrogant hopes!

"'If we look around us in the world,' says another celebrated writer, 'we will see that those who are born with the same advantages are not all equally prosperous in the course of life. While some by wise and steady conduct attain distinc-

tion in the world, and pass their days with comfort and honour; others of the same rank, by mean and vicious behaviour, forfeit the advantages of their birth, involve themselves in much misery, and end in being a disgrace to their friends, and a burden on society.'

"We must, therefore, perceive that whatsoever is to be our profession, *virtue* is the one thing needful. This is the universal preparation for every character and station in life. Bad as the world is, respect is always paid to virtue. Without it the brightest parts and the most shining talents are of no avail; they are but as a transitory meteor, compared with the steady and resplendent light of the sun in the firmament. Virtue is the true foundation of eminence in every liberal art; and of reputation and honour in every public and private station of life. It is what ennobles the character, and inspires into it generous sentiments, and a spirit undaunted by all the opposition of a wicked world. It makes the possessor of it superior to the changes of fortune; and enables him to say of her,

"'I can enjoy her when she's kind;
But when she dances in the wind,
And shakes her wings, and will not stay,
I puff the prostitute away.'

"We are all of us, however, setting out in the

pursuit of that fortune which the poet valued at so low a rate; and though virtue renders us superior to her, yet the enjoyment of her is, by no means, incompatible with virtue, but ought, rather, to be considered as one of its rewards. Unless, however, we invest ourselves with all the accoutrements necessary for the chase, fortune, like the sly fox, will constantly elude our grasp, and disappoint all our endeavours.

"What, you will ask, are the accoutrements necessary? We must take virtue for our coat of mail — a sound judgment for our helmet—undaunted resolution for our shield; our weapons must be sagacity and perseverance; and we must not forget to take with us the mantle of sound philosophy, which can only be acquired by assiduous cultivation of our minds in the season of youth. Thus equipped, we may, with God's blessing, assure ourselves of success.

"The joy we shall experience in again meeting our relatives, and the pleasure we shall feel in their society after being so long separated from them—will, soon, make us forget the sorrow we experience at parting with one another.

"Should any of this assemblage, before our next meeting, embark on the busy stage of life, may they be an honour to their friends, and a credit to themselves (!) and may those whom a revolving

year brings again together to engage in the pursuit of learning, meet each other with pleasure and delight! "Farewell!"

I have placed before the reader the above address, not so much for its intrinsic literary merits, as for the purpose of giving a link in the chain of my brother's singular union of character—enthusiasm joined to caution; energy to sagacity. It was at sixteen years of age, that he made this address—so full of "gentle sage advices," to his fellow-students. What he inculcated upon others, he did not himself neglect.

ON THE ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED FROM THE STUDY OF METAPHYSICS, READ BEFORE THE STUDENTS OF KING'S COLLEGE, ABERDEEN, NOVEMBER 1827.

"THE human Mind is the noblest work of the Almighty Creator, which reason discloses to our view. It is that vital principle, that spark of celestial fire which constitutes our existence, and which will survive not only our mortal bodies, but even the wreck of conflicting elements, and the destruction of universal nature. In its state of primitive purity, the mind was the image of the perfections of its Author, and it still retains sufficient traces of its divine origin to entitle it

to our deepest and most profound meditation. Accordingly, we find that in every enlightened age, the study of the mind has been regarded as the most important which can engage the attention of man, as a rational or social being. On consulting the records of history, we find, in proportion to their cultivation or neglect of this study, nations emerging out of the darkness of ignorance and barbarism, or sinking again into their primitive obscurity.

"Hence we are entitled to conclude, that, on the knowledge and improvement of the mental powers, our interests and happiness, no less than our true dignity, essentially depend. The acquisition of such knowledge is the great object of moral science, to enumerate a few of the most obvious advantages resulting from which shall form the subject of the following Essay.

"In treating this subject, I shall not pretend to follow any accurate scientific division, such division being in general very incomplete; but shall confine myself to some of the most important advantages of Moral Science, in the order in which they most naturally occur.

"Moral Science, then, tends in the highest degree to the improvement and perfection of our mental powers. By means of these powers its investigations are prosecuted, and these very

powers form the subject of inquiry. This reciprocal advantage is peculiar to the study of the mind, and is the result of its being an original and independent science.

"All the other arts and sciences have an intimate and mutual connexion; the study of the mind is the foundation of them all, and from it they derive their elegance and their utility. Viewed in this light, philosophical inquiries into the mental faculties must afford peculiar interest to every reflecting mind. On the conclusions to which such researches lead, we dwell with a higher degree of satisfaction, when we consider that they result exclusively from the subject itself, and owe their elucidation to no other science. Small, indeed, must the curiosity of that man be, who can content himself with the mere mechanical use of those powers which distinguish him above the lower animals, without feeling any inclination to examine the laws which regulate their operations; and thus, as it were, to view the image of the Author of nature in the fairest of his works.

"Before making any further observations on this head, we may proceed to reply to one or two objections brought forward against the study of the mind. It has been asserted, that this is a subject far removed beyond the limits of the

human faculties, and that we can attain to no certain knowledge respecting it. The absurd hypotheses of the school-men, and the abstruse and unintelligible doctrines of many modern philosophers, (who have attempted to veil their own ignorance under the specious cloak of an obscure and technical phraseology,) seem indeed, to justify this opinion; but we must remember that the abuse of any science furnishes no solid argument against its use. The phenomena of the intellectual are no less open to our inspection than those of the material world. They offer a sphere of observation no less fair and extensive. The conclusions are no less certain, since in either science they are founded on a full and cautious induction. In both sciences we ascend from particular facts to general principles, called laws of nature, &c.; there our investigations must cease.

"Our evidence, too, repecting the existence and operations of the mind, is even more certain than that with regard to matter. The former is the result of consciousness, the latter of perception. Sensation and perception are, in some degree, common to man with the lower animals: consciousness and reflection are nobler powers, and assign him a more exalted station in the scale of beings. If these powers, then, be conferred upon man for such noble ends, shall he

not employ them? The mind is the only legitimate sphere of their operation, the only subject, indeed, to which they can be directed. Hence, it must be evident to every candid mind, that it is the benevolent intention of nature that man should derive a great part of his happiness from the cultivation of his mental faculties. 'The improvement of these powers,' says an elegant writer, 'exalts and dignifies our nature; the neglect keeps us on a level with savages, and almost with the brute creation.'

"Thus we have endeavoured to show the intrinsic utility and dignity of the study of the mind: we may now proceed to consider a few of its most important applications.

"The mind, then, as we have already stated, is not only worthy of inquiry on its own account, it is still more so as the foundation of the sciences and the fine arts. With the general science of mind, indeed, all the pursuits of life, whether speculative or practical, are intimately connected. We repeat this because many have imagined that this study has no relation to the common affairs of life. How egregiously such men are mistaken, we hope, shall soon be apparent.

It is by a knowledge of the mind, the orator and the statesman rise to eminence, and rule at will the passions or the interests of men.

"This knowledge enables the moralist to convince man that the path of virtue alone conducts to happiness; the preacher to inculcate with resistless energy the sublime doctrines of religion, to console the afflicted mind, or strike terror into the guilty breast. Hence, too, the poet reaches the secret avenues of the heart, and inspires us with a kindred flame, — the painter adapts the principles of his art to our perceptive powers, and makes the dull canvas glow with all the beauties of external nature.

"A knowledge of the mind is also of the utmost service to the medical faculty. The success of the physician depends not altogether on his treatment of the body in the various disorders to which it is subjected; it also depends in no small degree on his giving to the imagination such a bent, as to render it subservient to the purpose of recovery. With anatomy and physiology, the science of mind has a close connexion. They tend to illustrate each other in several important points, particularly in respect to our sensitive powers; and we may safely venture to affirm, that, without their mutual cooperation, we should for ever remain in ignorance of many useful facts which are now perfectly established.

"Law and jurisprudence, too, in order that the

system may be complete, and productive of salutary effects to society, must be founded on a knowledge of those principles which form the chief ingredients in the mental constitution.

"Language is an instrument closely connected with the philosophy of the mind. The more the latter is cultivated, the higher the degree of perfection to which the former attains—to the grammarian, therefore, a knowledge of the mind is of essential importance. It explains many interesting facts connected with his pursuits, of which, without its aid, he must have remained ignorant, and enables him to view with a more scientific eye the gradual advance of intellect through all the various stages of progressive refinement of language. Viewed in this light, the structure of language is one of the most important sources of information to the student of mind, and may be regarded as a mirror reflecting a true and accurate picture of national character.

"Hence, too, the superior pleasure the moral philosopher derives from the perusal of the annals of History, where he sees pourtrayed the events of ancient times, and traces through the obscure and distorted medium of hypocrisy or ambition those secret yet powerful springs of action which must for ever remain concealed from the

less penetrating eye of the careless and superficial observer. Such are a few of the most important practical purposes to which moral science may be applied.

"It has not only, however, been argued against the study of the mind, that it is unconnected with, but also that it unfits man for, the business of common life. It is asserted that the moral philosopher, by excessive attention to the operations of his own mind, becomes gradually alienated from the external world, and suffers his imagination to roam uncontrolled through the wide but barren regions of speculation. That such men exist we will not venture to deny; but, surely, the excess to which any study is in some few instances carried, is no solid argument for its rejection. Such examples rather afford a melancholy proof of the frailty of human nature, and the errors into which even men of the loftiest genius are sometimes apt to fall.

"Another objection brought forward against the study of the mind, (and the last we shall mention,) is, that we do not derive such pleasure from the exercise of our perceptive powers, when we learn to trace them back to their original sources.

"This objection is equally false and unfounded,

and could only originate with those who are themselves ignorant of this sublime science. An acquaintance with the laws of perception, instead of lessening the delight which we experience in contemplating the gay and varied scenes of nature, contributes in the highest degree to heighten and refine it. It opens to our admiring eyes new views of the power and wisdom of that Almighty Being in every part of whose works the most consummate goodness and perfection are displayed, whose hand maintains the planets in their orbits, and provides for the wants and necessities, nay, even the pleasures, of his rational and intelligent offspring.

"That there are difficulties connected with, and sources of error peculiar to, the study of the mind, we cannot deny. But ought we to despair on that account? Should not such obstacles rather inspire us with redoubled ardour to remove or obviate them?

"The mental operations, at first view, appear so numerous and complicated as to baffle all our endeavours at classifying or arranging them; but, upon a more accurate inspection, they are found to result from a comparatively small number of simple and original faculties. Is it not probable, then, that habits of attention will, in like manner, enable us with increasing facility,

to surmount all those barriers which might impede our progress into the fair fields of science and philosophy?

"In this respect the mind may be compared to a chemist who, from a small number of simple elements, forms that endless variety of compounds which are applied to so many and such opposite uses.

"To the chemist it is of the last importance to be intimately acquainted with the properties of his various compositions, and to know exactly the number and relative proportions of the simple ingredients which compose them. Is not such knowledge of equal importance to the mind? and ought we not to use every method by which it can be obtained?

"The difficulties may, indeed, be considerable; but let us remember that proportional to them is the value of the acquisition;—let us view even these formidable guardians of the portals of philosophy without dismay, and press boldly forward into the inmost recesses of the temple of science.

"We shall now take a short view of the advantages more immediately resulting from moral science, as applied to the improvement of the intellectual and moral powers, and the formation of philosophical systems of logic and morality.

"Logic teaches us the order to be observed in the investigation of truth, and the communication of it to others. In a true and well-digested system of logic consists the perfection of our intellectual powers, and on a knowledge of the mind alone can such a system be justly founded.

"Hence the judgment is strengthened; we acquire habits of independent thinking, and of close and convincing argumentation; the attention is fixed and made subservient to the purposes of science and philosophy; in a word the understanding is confirmed in the habitual exercise of all its native capacities. Logic points out to us the proper objects of philosophical research; gives us clear and perspicuous ideas respecting them; and assigns the boundary which, in our investigations, we cannot pass, without wandering into a dark and unknown region, where all is doubt and uncertainty, and where dangers surround us on every hand. From their erroneous ideas on these points proceeded the vain and futile speculations of philosophers respecting the connexion between body and mind, cause and effect; subjects over which the wisdom of the Deity has drawn a veil impenetrable to mortal eyes.

"It is the province of logic too, to determine the real and comparative value of the various sciences, as connected with the improvement

of the mind, or with the practical business of life,—to point out the mode of investigation peculiar to each, and the order which ought to be observed in the gradual development of the intellectual powers; hence it is of the greatest importance to the instructor of youth, and differs as widely from that disputatious art into which it degenerated in the hands of the schoolmen, as the objects of true knowledge differ from those to which they directed their attention.

"It is unnecessary to trace the connexion which subsists between morality and the science of mind.

"We have already mentioned the importance of this science to the moralist, and we may now add, that the active or moral powers are in the highest degree deserving of our attention, as they constitute the great sources of action on the stage of life, and upon their proper cultivation depends the welfare of society. The actions of men, though in some respects they may be considered as the effect of their opinions, and, consequently, of their intellectual powers, are far more generally the effect of their active principles; from these spring all that variety of moral character, the phenomena resulting from which are continually soliciting our notice.

"To man as a social being, therefore, the science

which proposes to itself such objects of investigations must be of the highest importance, and the cultivation of it must be inseparably connected with his best and dearest interests.

"But the advantages attending moral science are still more striking and important, when viewed with respect to the education of youth. Much has been written on this subject, and various opinions have been expressed regarding it; all, however, coincide in the general value of the aids it receives from moral science.

"We shall confine ourselves to a very few observations.

"The great business of education, then, ought to be to cultivate the mental powers in such a manner as to carry them to the highest pitch of perfection of which they are susceptible,—to guard the youthful mind from all erroneous impressions, and to train it in the love of truth and virtue.

"There are few men to be found endowed with good sense and the power of reflection, who are not conscious of very considerable defects in some of their mental powers; but how few have been able to remedy them! Such defects arise, not so much from natural constitution, as from some error in education, the principal object of which, in this respect, is to cultivate the various faculties

in unison, to restrain such as are too exuberant, to strengthen those in which there appears to be any deficiency, to assign to each their proper degree of employment, and thus to maintain the whole intellectual frame in the most perfect state of vigour and of harmony.

"From want of attention to this, the most unfortunate consequences may ensue to the individual in after life, a fact so well known that illustration becomes unnecessary.

"An acquaintance with the principles of the mental constitution would not only enable the instructor of youth to maintain that balance in the various faculties which is so essential to happiness; it would also suggest to him many useful expedients by which these faculties might be severally improved, and would qualify him for assigning the exercises which might prove most conducive to this end, according to the diversity of character and ability of his youthful charge. Such an instructor was Socrates, the most venerable of the sages of antiquity, who, as history informs us, taught the Athenian youth, not so much by direct precepts, as by a faculty he possessed of leading them gradually by the exercise of their own powers to the truths which he wished to inculcate. It is an undeniable fact in our constitution, that those associations and prejudices

which are formed in childhood can never be totally eradicated; prejudices which, indeed, warp and obscure the judgment, which 'have twined their roots with all the essential principles of the human frame.' Reason may indeed, shake them off, but they still retain a secret yet powerful influence over the heart, and hence become the sources of action in those situations where they may be attended with the most pernicious effects. In the years of infancy we repose implicit reliance on our guardians or instructors, and imbibe, with unsuspecting confidence, the precepts which they communicate — a wise provision this of nature, but liable to the most fatal abuses. How often does the child hear from the lips of his parents the praises of wealth and grandeur, as if these were the only essentials to happiness, — a voice far more dangerous and alluring than that of the syrens in the fables of antiquity! 'Illa vox, quæ timebatur erat blanda, non tamen publica: at hæc, quæ timenda est, non ex uno scopulo, sed ex omni terrarum parte circumsonat.'

"A single word of esteem or admiration of riches falling from a father is enough to create a corresponding passion for them in his son, a passion which he will find it almost impossible to efface. In the language of Seneca, 'Admirationem nobis parentes auri argentique fecerunt, et tenuis

infusa cupiditas altius sedit crevitque nobiscum.'

"If impressions, then, be so easily received, of what vast importance is it that they should be engaged on the side of truth and virtue, which alone can guide us with safety and honour through all the varied scenes of life, and at last conduct us into a blissful immortality! Such is the great and ultimate end of moral science. By an extensive acquaintance with human nature, indeed, men of vigorous minds are sometimes enabled to form an accurate estimate of their own acquirements, and thus, in some measure, to correct or supply their defects; but to what pain and labour does not this subject them, and of what infinite value must such an education be, as would obviate the necessity of spending a whole lifetime in unlearning the errors of our youth, and enable us to press forward with unimpeded flight in the pursuit of truth, till at length we attain to the ultimate perfection of our nature!

"From these and innumerable other advantages, we might fondly hope that, were the science of mind universally understood and applied to practice, Society would assume a more perfect form, and realize the happy illusions of the classic poets respecting the golden age.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

CHAPTER IV.

Connexion with the Governor of Hudson's Bay.—His Career.—Refuses in 1825, and consents in 1828 to go to Hudson's Bay.—Reasons for abandoning Study for the Church, and for going to America, detailed in a Letter to his eldest Brother.—Occupations, Summer 1828.—Letter to the Author.—Sails for America.

Sir George Simpson, the local-governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, is the illegitimate son of our mother's eldest brother. To our mother he owed not only much of his early education, but also his elevation from the position of obscurity and neglect in which his birth naturally placed him.

By assiduous entreaty she prevailed upon her brother, a gentleman in London engaged in the West India Trade, to receive the youth into his counting-house. Once there his advance was rapid, for he was clever, active, plausible, and full of animal spirits. In this employment he attracted the notice of an influential gentleman, who had a business connexion with the house. This was Mr. Andrew Colvile, brother-in-law

of the Earl of Selkirk, a nobleman who had, strangely, identified himself with the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company, taking a prominent part in the rivalry which, for several years, was carried on between that chartered company, and the active and energetic, though unchartered, North-West Company of Canada.

This rivalry caused some scenes of bloodshed; but was more prolific of "monster prosecutions," which, at the time, excited as much interest in Canada, as did the recent state trials in Ireland.—It was truly described in an act of the Imperial Parliament, as, "having been for some years past productive of great inconvenience and loss, not only to the said company and association, but to the trade in general; and also of great injury to the native Indians, and of other persons subjects to his Majesty; and the animosity and feuds arising from such competition, have also for some years past kept the interior of America to the northward and westward of the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and of the territories of the United States of America, in a state of constant disturbance; and many breaches of the peace extending to the loss of lives, and considerable destruction of property, have continually occurred therein."

George Simpson was sent out to America to

take a share in this troublous contest; but, shortly after his arrival, a coalition of the contending parties took place. The capitalists of the North-West Company, whose resources and credit were well-nigh exhausted by the huge expenses, (particularly for legal processes,) to which this rivalry exposed them, yet succeeded in making an arrangement with their chartered opponents, by which they retained one-half of the capital stock of the United Association, and secured more than half of the offices in America for their resident associates.

Mr. Simpson was immediately named as resident-governor of one of the divisions of the country thus restored to harmony; and he exhibited so much address and activity in this office, (favourable accidents also occurring,) that, a few years afterwards, he was appointed governor of the whole of the Company's possessions in America, an office which he still continues to hold.

In 1825, he came to Britain; and, in visiting his aunt at Dingwall, he was so much struck with the manner, appearance, and general character of my brother, then returned from his first year's attendance at the University, that he earnestly pressed him to go to America as his (the governor's) secretary.

This offer was declined; but proposals made to my eldest brother, (no relative, but a school-fellow of Sir George's,) to proceed to America as superintendent of the Hudson's Bay Company's Marine department on the Pacific, were accepted, and he proceeded to America in 1826. Alas! the disappointments, privations, annoyances, and anxieties which he encountered in this office, resulted in his death in 1831. The writer, also, was so lured by the highly coloured descriptions of adventure to be encountered, and wealth to be won, in this ungenial region, that he became two years afterwards (1828) an emigrant to it. After fourteen years' bitter experience of its cares and crosses, he relinquished all connexion with it. What were the feelings and opinions, in regard to the service which he embraced, of our more gifted and distinguished brother, will be gathered in the sequel from his own words.

In 1828, the offers which he had refused in 1825 were again pressed upon him,—now with success. In the following letter addressed to his eldest brother, he candidly states the reasons which led to this acceptance. It is dated from Norway House in the Hudson Bay Territories, 29 June, 1829:

"You will no doubt be surprised to find me addressing you from this place, unless, perhaps,

the Governor informed you, during his visit to the Columbia last winter, of the probability of my joining him here this season.

"The reasons which led to this determination on my part, none have a better right to know than you, my dear Æmilius, who, while they were fatherless and unprotected, acted more than a fraternal part toward two boys who *then* knew not how to estimate such kindness.

"Shortly after entering the University, when I began to reflect on choosing some future line of life, of the three learned professions that which tallied most with my own inclinations, and for which I conceived myself best adapted, was the medical. This idea I quietly entertained for about two years, being too much occupied with my studies and amusements to trouble myself much on the subject; when finding that, from my silence, my friends took it tacitly for granted that I was rearing for the church, I thought it time to suggest that my own sentiments led to a different direction. A medical education is, however, an expensive one; and I was soon convinced from the total want of the *needful* in the family, that it would be imprudent to cherish these views any longer. I, therefore, made up my mind, though with some reluctance, to comply with the wishes of my family, and "follow

the church." To the study of divinity, indeed, I had only two objections, but they were serious ones.

"First, an extreme diffidence in my own religious qualifications; and

"Second, a deficiency in the Gaelic language, which left me but little chance of obtaining a living in that part of the country where I could chiefly expect the exertion of influence in my behalf.

"If to these you add a strong antipathy to the very idea of becoming a tutor in a family, which would necessarily be my lot for some years; and, with all, a little of the spirit of contradiction, and an unwillingness to be led, the ranks of opposition were pretty strong. Having, however, partly surmounted, partly evaded these formidable obstacles—the life of a clergyman, his opportunities of doing good, together with the domestic quiet and happiness he may enjoy, were prospects to which I looked forward with feelings certainly of a very pleasing description.

"I was now preparing to take out my degrees, winter 1827-28, when, just after Alic, who spent a happy week with me on his way to London, had left me as I almost felt alone in the world, I received a letter from my uncle, stating that

in a recent communication from America, the Governor had expressed a regret that I was not coming out that season; but that, if I would still be induced to accept the offers he had made me three years before, I might join him about the time I am now addressing you. The idea of pushing my fortune in America I had long forgotten; but now that my studies at college were about drawing to a close, I thought it high time to consult with my friends upon the matter. This I did at first by letter, from Aberdeen, and personally on my return. I found but one opinion among them, viz., that from the prospects held out, it would be at best imprudent in me to decline the generous proposals. In this opinion the worthy parson of Knockbain*—to whose, I may say, paternal kindness, I am under the deepest obligations—fully concurred; desiring me to keep this in view, that if, upon trial, the country, &c., did not agree with me, I might still return to the old world, and pursue my studies as if nothing had happened.

"His advice was sensible; and you know how

* The Rev. Roderick M'Kenzie, for more than half a century clergyman of the parish of Knockbain in Ross-shire; he married a sister of the elder Charles Grant, and was, in benevolence and hospitality, the very model of a parish minister.

difficult a thing it is for a young man, when his friends are bent on a particular object, to resist the torrent.

"All these considerations, (for the old objections to the Church, though I overcame them separately, now revived and acted as principal auxiliaries,) combined with a strong though hitherto latent desire to travel, have induced me to take a step which, be it for my good or for my ill, has cast my lot, for some years at least, in the wilds of the New World."

He continues:

"The terms of my engagement, after some correspondence with the Directors through the medium of uncle Geddes were, at length, settled. They are favourable, for I enter on exactly the same footing, in every respect, as if I were in the last two years of my apprenticeship; (i. e.) I am only bound for two years, with the last two years' salary;" which salary was fixed at the sum of 40*l.* sterling for the first year, and 50*l.* for the second year.

It will be, naturally and justly, supposed that expectations of rapid promotion and handsome emolument must have been held out to induce a young man of my brother's character, talents, and acquirements, to accept this paltry pittance. That these expectations were to be fallacious;

that his situation and treatment were of a very different nature from his anticipations, he very soon discovered. But he also soon foresaw that, whenever the Governorship of the country became vacant, he himself would be the person best adapted to fill it; and that he would obtain this appointment seemed to be tacitly allowed by all parties. He did not foresee that a path could be found in the same country, by which a much higher distinction could be attained. Attained it was, but at what a price!

An appointment of high promise, pressed upon a young man in his twenty-first year, would generally have the effect of causing him to devote the few antecedent months to idleness and amusement: not so with my brother. He passed the summer in attendance at the office of the county clerk in his native town, with the view of acquiring habits of business, devoting a part of each day to the study of mineralogy and botany.

The following is a letter addressed by him to me (then in Canada) during this interval.

"Dingwall, Sept. 30, 1828.

"MY DEAREST BROTHER,

"I have assumed this page of our mother's letter, though I have little wherewith to fill it; and, though you are still my debtor for an epistle,

the reply to which I, however, expect to receive ere this reaches the western shores of the Atlantic.

"I have, since I last addressed you, been a regular attendant at Mr. H. J. Cameron's office, and flatter myself I have acquired some ideas of business that may be of service to me.

"Your hours of writing at Lachine must be very irksome; I should not exactly relish such confinement by way of a first trial. I am delighted to find that, notwithstanding such discipline, you enjoy good health and high spirits. Your Highland fraternity will, no doubt, keep you all alive and happy.

"Our glens and our mountains, though but as rat-holes and mole-hills in comparison with those of America, have this summer presented a scene of unusual beauty; and we Dingwall bloods have at last been intrepid enough to storm the heights of Ben Nevis. We mustered eight in number (exclusive of two men whom we hired to carry the prog), viz., Bailie Donald Stewart, Dr. Wood, (sirnamed Don Miguel, and whom we had to transport part of the way in a basket after we had consumed its contents,) Roderick Hay, two William Rosses, George Mackintosh, C. Stewart, and myself. A merry group we were, with plenty of music, vivers,

and *aqua vitæ*. The view from the beacon point (on which we dined) was truly grand, including an infinity of hills, lakes, and rivers, which lay seemingly at our feet—the wide expanse of the German Ocean—a peep of the North Sea 'yond John-o'-Groat's, and of the Atlantic. Often amid the general merriment, as my eye wandered almost unconsciously to gaze on the distant verge of the Atlantic, did I wish you were with us; but then the mortifying idea occurred, what would an inhabitant of the New World think even of this? Pray, my dearest Alic, do in your next give a somewhat more circumstantial and detailed account of some of the more remarkable features in your mode of life, and of the scenery of the country in which you live: e. g., what sort of a house you have? what kind of vehicles you have to carry you to Montreal? and what society does that city afford?—its appearance—the breadth of the St. Lawrence, &c. But I weary you, as you delight not in long-winded descriptions.

"There is but little local news beyond the narrow range of our gossip circle to communicate—perhaps none deserving of a passage across the Atlantic. Still, if I can furnish you with any that will amuse but for a moment, the smile they call forth will be an abundant recompense.

"Hugh Cameron, my '*interim magister*,' has turned banker, which swells his income to upwards of a thousand a-year! So much for good abilities and address; pretty fair, no doubt, for remaining in one's native place. He now treats with madeira and claret; not superior in flavour, I'd venture to say, to your Canadian. But, though our "glass of fashion," he has not as yet had, nor is likely in a hurry to have, many followers in his matrimonial career. In fact, the matrimonial bubble, which produced so much excitement on the surface of our '*petit monde*,' has, after all, quietly subsided into the old level of celibacy—or, if you will, of bachelors and old maids. I wish you saw Miss H——: she told me t' other day, with one of her inimitable airs, as I was escorting a certain young lady, that 'Miss —— had more beaux than she had.'

"Mr. G—— is quite well; but the dapper little gentleman is in no hurry to get buckled (coupled if ye will): I suppose he'd first wish a snug stipend tagged to his tail. Poor black John, the nabob's man, kicked on Saturday; our mountain dew was too potent for his sunburnt brain: he died a martyr to his *spiritual* zeal. His master was affected even unto tears; but the old sinner can't *yet* think of parting with his mistress.

"There is no other local news here worth repeating; but that our beautiful strath has been very gay this season with the Davidsons and visitors at the Spa, &c. All friends here are well, and desire to be kindly remembered: and, in hopes of soon hearing from you, I remain, my dearest Alic,

"Your ever affectionate brother,

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

In pursuance of the engagement with the Hudson's Bay Company already adverted to, my brother left Ross-shire in January, 1829. But, profiting by his reverend friend's counsel — that it might possibly be advisable for him to return to Scotland, and resume his preparation for the ministry—he remained a short time in Aberdeen, and attended the classes prescribed to students for the ministry.

Happy, indeed, would it have been had he finally devoted himself to that sacred office, for the duties of which his zeal, energy, and self-devotion so well qualified him; while, for its quiet enjoyments, his love of study and warm domestic affections were peculiarly adapted!

From Aberdeen he proceeded to London, where he spent several weeks; and sailed from Liverpool for New York on the 3rd March, 1829.

CHAPTER V.

Arrival in America.—Travels during Summer, 1829.—Light Canoes.—Canadian Voyageurs: their Habits and Songs.—A Winter in Canada.—L'Ame de Glace.—Journey to the North-west.—A troublesome Charge.—Extracts from Letters to the Author.—A *pleasant* Residence.

My brother arrived at Lachine,—a small village near the city of Montreal at which the Company's Canadian business is conducted,—on the 25th April 1829, and I had for three days the satisfaction of again associating with him,—my station being at that place.

He left it on the 30th April with the annual spring party, which proceeds from Canada to the Hudson's Bay Territories.

Unfortunately the three officers who were his fellow-travellers in the journey, were not fair specimens of the officers of the association. They were reckless, intemperate men, and their proceedings on the journey were of the most disorderly description.

My brother, not being one of "those faultless

monsters whom the world ne'er saw," enjoyed this rattling, rolicking mode of travelling, judging, of course, that it formed part of "*life* in Hudson's Bay." But on a strict investigation being subsequently made into these scenes of disorder, it could not be asserted that he had ever been in the slighest degree intoxicated; strict sobriety was a habit from which he never swerved.

This investigation dissipated his misapprehension regarding the manner of life in the country which he had adopted. On the 18th June, he joined Governor Simpson at Norway House, and immediately entered upon the duties of his secretary and amanuensis, accompanying him in a tour which he made through the south eastern part of the Hudson's Bay Territory. Towards the latter end of August they reached Lachine; and I again enjoyed for a lengthened period, the society of my brother.

He arrived in high health and spirits, quite delighted with the journey; which had been performed in a light canoe—that most exciting mode of voyaging—in which the traveller is hurried on, without the slightest exertion or fatigue on his own part, over every impediment, at the utmost speed which nine pairs of strong arms, kept in exercise for an almost incredible portion of each day by a liberal internal application of rum, by an occa-

sional outward application of "a bit of oak," can impart to the graceful and buoyant north canoe.*

Talk of factory labour, and ten hours' bills! why a genuine light canoe-man of the old school was always ready for his work twenty hours out of the twenty-four. And a gay and merry race they were, these Canadian voyageurs, even under this excessive toil! Wherever they went, they gaily sang their voyageur songs. These have often mixed with the wild cries of the savages of Missouri and Ohio: the St. Lawrence, Ottawa, and each Canadian river, were, for many long years, navigated only by the happy race who carolled them forth: they lightened the labours of the adventurous rovers who first penetrated into the "Indian Territory," and pushed their way even to the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Sea.

The race is now all but extinct. Their songs, in a few years, will be forgotten: nor will I maintain that they were much worthy of preservation either for their music or their words. Yet many an hour have I listened to them with

* The canoes are built of thin cedar laths, covered over with the tough bark of the birch-tree. They are so light, that one which conveys twelve or fourteen people, with luggage, &c., on long journeys, is carried past the rapids, or falls, and frequently across several miles of country, by two men.

pleasure; and "*La Belle Rose*"* yet would sound sweeter to my ear,—albeit it were struck up by a rough voice, and responded to by a rougher chorus,—than the strains of Grisi,—nay, of the sweet singer of mine own North Country, Wilson.

Governor Simpson made a matrimonial visit to England in 1829-30, and during his absence my brother formed one of the establishment in the Canada agency.

* Every Englishman is supposed to be able to join in "God save the Queen!" so every Canadian voyageur can swell, with his sweet voice, the chorus of "*La Belle Rose*;" and, in consequence, it is generally selected to give *éclat* to the departure and arrival of the few bark canoes which still, once a-year, start from Canada for the North-west.

"La Belle Rose" is a virtuous young lady, described by the voyaging troubadour as magnanimously declining naughty offers made to her, though they were backed by a settlement of "*six cens francs* par un," expressing her rejection thus:

"Je ne couche point avec un homme
Hors qu'il m'épouse auparavant."

Admirable, indeed, is the resolution declared by this damsel (would that all damsels would observe it); and, to respect such a resolution, every good and true voyageur was bound by a solemn oath, which he took on passing the Rubicon—the point any progress beyond which made him a true "*homme du nord*—" possessed of an indisputable right to look with contempt on "*les Mangeurs de lard*" (pork-eaters) of his native parishes.

This Rubicon, by-the-bye, often shifted its position, at each change being placed farther from the voyageur's centre of

He was a scholar and a gentleman, and this was sufficient to ensure him every kind of oppression and annoyance, which could safely be practised, from the person who held supremacy there. "*L'ame de glace,*" was the name given by the Canadians to this frozen martinet; and well did he merit it.

To cast my brother into the shade; to sneer at his pretensions (albeit, they were not intruded); to enforce such excessive hours of business as were alike destructive of health and pleasure; and, to utterly exclude him from the society of the

civilisation—Montreal. It was at a little lake, named the "Committee's punch-bowl," situated at the summit of a pass in the Rocky Mountains, its waters running into the Arctic Sea from the eastern end, and into the Pacific Ocean from the western, that I took a solemn vow,—"*De ne jamais coucher avec la femme ou la fille d'un voyageur—sans qu'elle veut.*"

The music of a large number of the voyageur songs was noted, and published recently by Sir George Buck; a few of them have been adapted to quadrilles, and are (or were) fashionable in Canada. The words are generally silly, and often indecent; indeed, I hardly know one that would bear printing—either sense or decency would be wanting. They bear intrinsic evidence of ancient composition; i. e. by the first French emigrants to Canada, for French cities are frequently mentioned, while Canadian towns are seldom named. Some hundred years hence they will be eagerly sought by Canadian antiquaries, who will discover *sense* in them, as other antiquaries *have* done, in strains equally trivial.

neighbouring city, for which he was so well fitted, constituted the delight of this person! And, great as is my admiration of the extremes of fortitude and perseverance which my brother exhibited in his three years' travels in the Arctic region, I must confess that, to my mind, they appear less extraordinary than the patience and coolness, with which a man, so young, so gifted, so ardent, and so sensitive, endured this trying ordeal. Even his stout constitution began to give way under it; and as he grasped my hand on parting with me in April, he said, "thank God I am getting away, for I couldn't have stood another week of it."

The party which annually leaves Canada for the Indian Territories, is composed, principally of young men who have been engaged by recruiting agents during the previous winter. The North-West Company, which had much popularity among the French Canadians, always had a selection from the *élite* of the youth of the parishes of the Montreal district. It gave high wages to its servants, supplied them, to an extent sufficient for an economical man, with clothing, &c., gratis; foreseeing that, while a few of its servants would confine themselves to these supplies,—thereby lay by their annual wages, and thus return to Canada with wealth sufficient to

settle down as the rich men and heroes of their native parish (a bait to induce others to follow the same course)—the great majority would, with the characteristic imprudence of their class, require supplies of clothing for themselves and also for their women (whom they changed frequently). For these articles they paid such enormous prices that the balance struck between the amount of their wages and of their supplies, frequently left them debtors at the year's end. While it was no unusual thing to see voyageurs of the old school returning to Canada with savings to the amount of five hundred, and even a thousand pounds, there were many of them whose debts to their employers exceeded three years' wages.

In the Hudson's Bay Company's service the system is very different. The wages given are low; seventeen pounds sterling per ann., being the standard for labouring men. No clothing is allowed to them gratis; but they can purchase their supplies from the Company's stores at very moderate prices. This, of course, places it out of the power of any servant to amass large savings. The employment also is quite altered. Under the old *régime* the establishments were large; where many Canadians are congregated together there will ever be much gaiety and amusement: and the service generally consisted of a hard canoe

paddle for two or three months in summer, during which there was abundance of excitement to lighten the toil; the winter bringing a few weeks' trial of strength and skill in wood-cutting, varied by an occasional journey, in which the qualities of their respective teams of dogs could be tested. Now the winter is passed in one unvarying round of monotonous labour by the few men scattered at the different posts; while the season of open water is entirely occupied by continual and exhausting toil in slow-moving boats.

No wonder that the gay Canadians of the old voyageur parishes of Sorel, Maskinonge, and Yamaska, dislike the new system, and decline to take service under it. The Canadians who now engage, are generally somewhat of the same class as were those with whom filled Falstaff up his redoubtable regiment. They obtain a few months' wages in advance—and that is their sole object, which, being accomplished, a considerable number never think of appearing at the point of embarkation; while of those who actually do take their departure in the northward bound brigade, many are in a similar condition to young Master Launcelot.*—"A fiend at their elbows continually

* "The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me, 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,' or good Gobbo, or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs—take the

urging, "use your legs, take the start, run away." And as they pass for a fortnight through a country which affords them numerous opportunities of putting the fiend's advice into execution, the management of such a party requires no little tact.

My brother had this charge on leaving Canada, in April 1830, and conducted his party, consisting of nearly a hundred persons, with much celerity and with less loss by desertion than was usual, to Lake Superior. Beyond this the route lay through the unsettled wilderness, where it required no conscience to tell the young recruits to "scorn running with their heels:" the most courageous fiend would have had difficulty in saying where they could run to. "You have been in Paradise so far, now you 'll be in purgatory," is the consolation they receive from the old hands when they are thus placed beyond the bounds of civilization.

At Lake Superior my brother was, therefore, freed from this troublesome charge, and joined the

start — run away.' My conscience says 'no! take heed, honest Launcelot—take heed, honest Gobbo, or, as aforesaid, take heed, honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well—the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.'—*Merchant of Venice.*

light canoes which conveyed Governor Simpson, his young wife, and several officers of the Company. Proceeding along the usual channel of inland communication, they reached York factory, on Hudson's Bay, on the 27th of June.

The light canoe voyage, and the system of all work and no play (still less pleasure) during a summer residence at that place, are concisely described in the following extract from my brother's letter to me:

"On the morning of the 21st of May I embarked in C. F. Christie's canoe, the Governor and his Lady being in company; spent a day at Fort William where we took two handsome north canoes (the most delightful of all conveyances), —each nine men. After many accidents from the high waters, in one of which Mr. Christie and I filled our canoe to the gunwales, in the river Savanna or Embarras, which obliged us all to encamp for half a day in a swamp during a strong frost—we arrived at Bas de la Rivière on the 5th of June. The Governor and Lady started the same evening for Red River, and Mr. Christie and I spent that and the following day with C. F. John Stuart; then continued on for Norway House, where, after very stormy weather in Lake Winipeg, we arrived on the 11th, and found we were only preceded by Mr. Miles, who had arrived in a

light canoe from York Factory at eleven o'clock the night before. On the 14th, the Governor and Lady, C. F. Finlayson, &c., arrived in two canoes from Red River, and remained till the 22nd; during which time many of the brigades from the interior made their appearance, and were despatched to York Factory without delay. On the evening of the 21st, six north canoes arrived with the recruits, &c., from Canada, and a few minutes after twelve (A.M. 22nd) we started for York in two canoes, the party consisting of the Governor and Lady, C. F. Lewes, C. T. Miles and I; Mr. Christie who is appointed to this place, and Mr. Finlayson having gone down some days before. We had a very merry descent, if you except a day and a half *degraded*,* in Knee Lake,—during which we had the honour of erecting and engraving a superb May-pole to Mrs. Simpson;† and after fine running of rapids in Hill River, &c., arrived here before day-break on the morning of the 27th, *i. e.*, in five days (including one day

* A voyageur expression, meaning detained by wind or weather.

† Mrs. (now Lady) Simpson was also our cousin. She was but eighteen when she married, and undertook the long journey, which was followed by a three years' residence in a distant and savage region. Her prepossessing appearance and manners made her an object of much interest among its few civilized (or, more properly, demi-civilized,) residents.

and a half stopped by weather)—a distance of four hundred miles; having come from Little Jack River the previous morning, 26th, a distance of one hundred and fifty measured miles without resting once.

"The despatches are just closed (31st of July), and I have at length a moment to myself, which has not been the case for upwards of a month past, during which I have had little time for sleep, and none for exercise. Indeed, exercise is almost a thing out of the question here in the summer season, even were there time for it; as the country round the Factory, though elevated above the river, is one entire swamp, covered with low stunted pine, and perfectly impenetrable at this season, even were it free of the clouds of mosquitos by which it is infested. In fact, the land seems from its quality to have been thrown up by the sea, and it is never thawed to any great depth even by the hottest summer. The myriads of mosquitos which it gives birth to are quite indescribable. The soil is never thawed by the sun's rays to the depth of more than ten or twelve inches; below, is a solid bed of frozen earth, while the upper covering affected by the sun's rays is of the consistence of clammy mud, through which the foot sinks at every step: even in the centre of the Factory, it is necessary

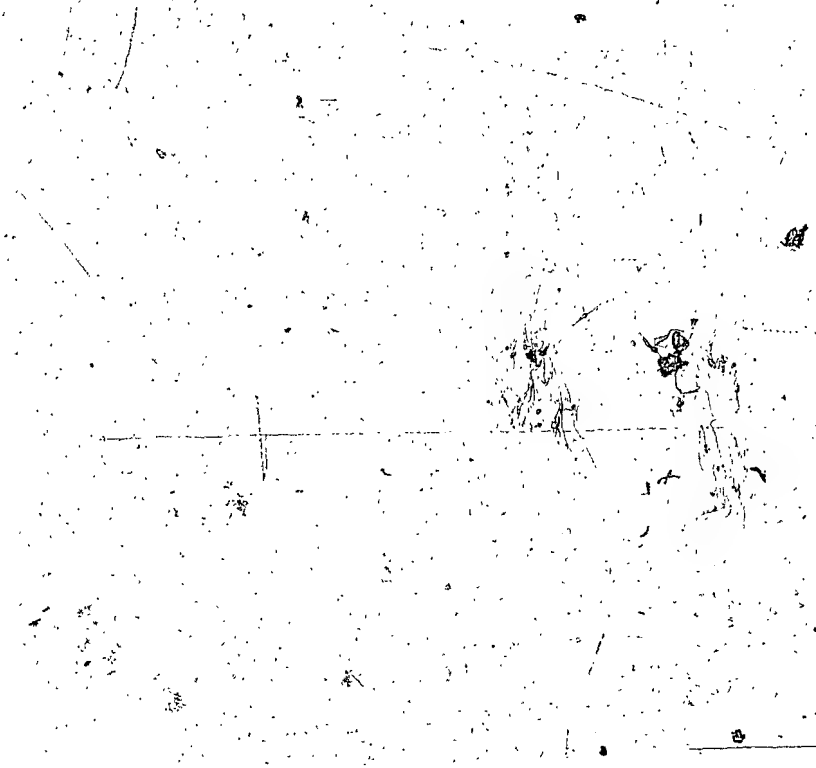
to keep on the wooden platforms to avoid sinking over the ankles.

"We have had some very hot weather during this month, the thermometer for several days ranging in the shade between 90° and 100°, and on one occasion I observed it as high as 99°; but the weather is extremely changeable, and a night or two after, the thermometer was as low as 29°: transitions from 90° to 40° I observed in several instances in the course of an hour, merely by a change of wind; and the sudden torrents of rain which frequently come from the bay would astonish you: in short, it is altogether a horrible climate, and the gloomy sternness of the winter, which rules two-thirds of the year, is not likely to improve the scene."

In this *pleasant* place he passed the remainder of the year, "in order," so he expresses it, "to get an insight into the accounts, which, like everything else about the establishment, are in the highest order;" he continues,

"And we are certainly very comfortable, — excellent accommodation and the best of fare, viz., venison (our staple dish), fish, hams, geese, buffalo tongues, soups, vegetables grown in hurdles laid out on the frozen earth, and then covered with soil—pastry, preserves, &c.; forbye excellent wines and famous porter." Snug quar-

ters these, so far as eating and drinking go, compared with his subsequent position at Fort Confidence, where a scanty supply of fish was often the only food, and unsweetened tea, made of the bitter herbs of the swamps, the only luxury! His cheerful temperament made him contented, if not happy, under any circumstances.



CHAPTER VI.

A Winter Journey of seven hundred Miles. — Life in the Woods. — Red River Colony. — Letter to the Author on the Death of our eldest Brother. — Sketches of Character.

My brother remained at York Factory — the *pleasant* residence described in the last chapter, — until the 10th of February 1831, when, agreeably to instructions, he started for Red River. This was a winter's journey of seven hundred miles; a good trial for a novice in this mode of travelling; but he made light of it.

He was furnished with an excellent set of dogs, by means of which, had he been lazily inclined, he might have been conveyed at his ease all day; or, at any rate, might have spared himself a few hours of the daily march. But he was ambitious after excellence in all things; he determined to make himself a "good leg" on snow-shoes, and never once took refuge in his vehicle.

He thus describes the journey to me: —

"On the 10th of February I started from the

Factory on snow-shoes,* with a small party of men and Indians, and a couple of trains of dogs.

"Our route lay partly on lake and river way, and partly through the woods to Norway House, and from thence on Lake Winipeg to the mouth of the Red River. We travelled as fast as the dogs could follow, which, for the greater part of the way, was about thirty miles per day; the last two hundred miles I accomplished in five days; and my longest day on snow-shoes was fifty miles. The whole distance is about seven hundred miles, which occupied twenty-two days' marching, besides six days we were obliged to stop to rest our dogs, at Oxford House, Norway House, and Beren's River. For myself I never felt fatigue, though I left two of my men completely knocked up on the way; besides taking fresh Indians at Norway House.

"Winter travelling is a most healthy and strengthening exercise, and gives one a most voracious appetite: 'good digestion waits on appetite, and health on both;' and, in your chamber dug into the snow, a fence of brushwood on

* Snow-shoes are made of wooden frames of about four feet long by a foot broad, peaked before and behind: the frames are supports for a network of sinews. They are strapped to the feet, and enable the wearer to pass *over* snow, into which he would otherwise sink deep. They weigh one and a half to two pounds per shoe.

three sides, a huge fire made of whole trees on the fourth; your bed a litter of pine branches spread on the frozen soil; your bedding a blanket, and (sometimes) a skin; the starry heavens your canopy—more sound and refreshing sleep is enjoyed, than waits upon many an one sunk in cushions of down, and curtained with silk.

"I think, by the bye, old Ovid must have been a traveller in a hyperborean region, from his lucid description of the most important operations of a winter encampment. I won't bore you with the classics; but here goes Dryden's version:—

'With leaves and bark he feeds the infant fire;
It smokes—and then, with trembling breath, he blows,
Till in a cheerful blaze the flames arose.
With brushwood and with chips he strengthens these,
And adds at last the trunks of rotten trees.
The fire thus formed, he sets the kettle on.'

"The day's march, moreover, is one scene of excitement; each man putting his best foot foremost, afraid that his follower will tread on his heels—the greatest insult 'a good leg' can receive. Then we have continual amusement from the dogs; their bells ring a merry lively peal as they jog along; they often show the perversity of their nature by going out of the right path, getting entangled among the trees or bushes, or

with each other; and to right them gives occasional relief to the monotony of the steady tramp.

"I thought little of the cold; and during the march never wore anything warmer than a cloth capot."

There are strong indications even in this brief narrative, that my brother wanted neither enterprise nor stamina for travelling in the "Far North." But it must not be supposed that all in that country possess the same powers, or the same habits; that all who go to this region of snow do, really, suffer an arctic change: on the contrary, my brother was considered as acting very absurdly in thus exposing himself unnecessarily to fatigue. There are many officers in that country who have never walked a day's journey on foot; whose whole life is one of almost objectless torpor, a transition *du lit à la table, de la table au lit.* When these do travel from one point to another, they do it with such means and appliances, that the journey entails but the smallest *modicum* of fatigue or exposure. There is a well known instance of an officer crossing from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific without once wetting his feet: he would have performed the same feat in returning, had not his carrier been bribed to souse him *by accident.* Another made a tour through a large portion of the country: over

hill and dale, through tangled forest, and up steep cliffs; yet no representation of his guides as to the all but impossibility of the dogs' dragging his carriole, with himself in it, over these difficulties, could induce him to swerve from his usual habit of walking one hour per day for appetite, remaining during the rest of the time snugly wrapped up in his furs and blankets. Such men would have been ill adapted for fatigues, labours, and privations, such as those which Arctic discovery imposed upon my brother.

Immediately on his arrival at Red River, he entered upon the duties for which his talents, assiduity, and business habits, so well fitted him; and those duties engrossed his whole time and attention. "My occupations, in short," he writes me, "have been very various; secretary, clerk, storesman, surveyor, &c.;" and such they continued for the succeeding five years, during which he was the active manager of the details of the colony business. He annually made a voyage to York Factory, to arrange that business in its external relations; this occupied four to five months of each year, and the remaining months were busily employed in its internal arrangements.

His own description of this secluded and almost unknown little colony, will be found in the

next chapter; I shall preface it by portions of his correspondence with me.

On hearing of our eldest brother's death, he wrote me thus:

"York Factory, July 21st, 1832.

"MY DEAREST ALIC.

"The hand of affliction has been heavy upon us this year. In my letter from Red River I mentioned the death of the Governor's infant boy; and now we have to deplore a much greater loss, the death of our poor brother, Æmilius. Poor fellow! he had been highly successful on the coast; conducted the expedition that safely formed the establishment at Nass, among the warlike inhabitants of Observatory Inlet; and was in the highest spirits at his good fortune when the arrow of death smote him.

"How vain are man's hopes! He was the dutiful son; the affectionate brother; and the generous honourable friend; but all this could not save him. Were there only this world, we might truly say of what profit is it to be upright? But there *is* a better one; and the circumstances of his death are most consoling. He expired perfectly sensible and resigned, at Nass, on the 2nd of September, after a thirteen days' illness of his old enemy—the liver complaint, during which

he endured much suffering, till towards the last, when the pain ceased; and so calm was his end, that the medical man alone perceived it. A few minutes before, he asked him "Doctor, is there no hope?" "Well, then," he continued, "God's will be done. I have nothing to communicate. I am resigned to my fate." He was buried with every mark of honour and respect; and his remains rest within a few yards of the guns of Fort Simpson. My heart is too full to say more. I send you your last letters to him. I have a lock of his hair, which I shall keep, or send to our dearest mother. Poor woman! what a blow this will be to her! May Providence support her under it!

"I can only acknowledge and thank you gratefully for your letters of the 20th and 29th of April, and the 7th and 10th of May, which I shall reply to by another opportunity. We two, I may say, are now left alone, and should, if possible, love each other even more than before. I am much harassed with business and my own feelings, which I must suppress.

"I shall write our dear mother under cover to you in a day or two. God bless you, my dearest Alic, and believe me,

"Your ever affectionate brother,

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

The following extracts afford rapid sketches of character of those with whom he was thrown into contact in this "wild unknown to public view." (Date, July, 1833. Governor Simpson was absent in England during the year 1833-34.)

"You would, perhaps, like to know how we have been going on here this season—exceedingly well; far less bustle and as good and rapid work as if the Governor himself were on the ground.

"*Entre nous*, I have often remarked, that his Excellency miscalculates when he expects to get more out of people by sheer driving; it only puts every one in ill humour. Since I have been at the Factory, I have never seen so much cheerfulness accompanied by strictest regularity as this season.

"To myself, in particular, the difference is very great; as, with all the Governor's good will and kind intentions, he has been to me a severe and most repulsive master. I know, and he has more than once told me, that this was a matter of policy with him; but he veiled his policy very badly, so that every clerk could see through it, which would have gradually brought me into contempt: but I have this season taught them that I could command respect, and have

been in consequence treated by every one, high and low, more *en bourgeois* than *en commis*.*

"Chief Factor Christie, you will have heard, is now governor of Red River, and has, besides, the summer management of York Factory; so that he is now in fact the second man in Rupert's land. And well does he merit such a situation; for a worthier or more honourable man I believe never existed. I feel particularly happy in acting under him; in fact, he is the only man whom I have yet seen in the country, whom I could now respect and esteem, as my immediate superior. His sound judgment, his integrity, his liberal and enlarged views, entitle him to the former, while his genuine kindness of heart and manner ensure the latter. Yes *manner*, as the governor has often told me, is half—more than half—the battle: but in that which he so much vaunted, he ought himself to have set the example. By assuming a harsh manner towards me, he should have known—he who lays claim to so much tact and knowledge of human nature—that the necessary effect on a young and generous mind would be a reciprocal repulsiveness, perhaps hatred; but I know his real sentiments, and forgive his apparent, though unnecessary unkindness. Yes, manner is half the battle; and in this,

* The Canadian terms for partners and employés.

as well as in every other service, (except those in which personal bravery is the only test of merit,) I say, in every peaceful service, he who does not endeavour to make himself agreeable to his fellow-men, acts in opposition to the first social principle, and cannot expect that his fellow-men should step out of their path to benefit or advance him.

"I will not conceal from you, that on a nearer view of his character than I before had, I lost much of that internal respect I entertained towards him. His firmness and decision of mind are much impaired; both in great and small matters, he has become wavering, capricious, and changeable; in household affairs, (for he is his own butler and housekeeper,) the very cook says openly, that he is like a weathercock.

"He has grown painfully nervous and crabbed, and is guilty of many little meannesses at table that are quite beneath a gentleman, and, I might add, are indicative of his birth.

"His general management of the colony I cannot admire: it is faulty and inconsistent in many respects. He was very much under the influence of the clergy, spent great part of his time with that cowardly empty little puppy ———: and was at the beck of every beggarly long-winded Scot, who came with a pitiful story, to ask a pound of tea or tobacco.

"Viewing the service generally, I must candidly confess, judging from the actions of others, that its promises of happiness are hollow, while an awful fatality seems to overhang its retiring members, a punishment for the unprincipled and licentious lives they have led. But let not this discourage us, my dear boy, who have commenced our career in better times, and with brighter hopes —for there are, really, so few men of any pretensions to talent in the country, that if common justice is done us we must soon become conspicuous. I speak the words of truth, not of vanity. Indeed, the Governor told me the very evening before starting, 'Whether my head be under or above the sod, your character and abilities will and must *soon* bring you forward.'"

(*Soon* is a word often understood differently by different persons. My brother writes me, three years afterwards,

"A word, even of acquiescence, from the Governor would have procured me a commission as Chief Trader this year: but the name of Simpson is a disadvantage; and, notwithstanding the promises made me when I came to the country, and the new and arduous duty to which I have volunteered, I must wait." Assuredly there was no nepotism here!)

"During the summer, we have had several

of the Commissioned gentlemen here: (Chief Factors* Cameron, Rowand, Lewes, and Mackenzie; and Chief Trader Todd, besides the residents.

"The first (Cameron) is our Senior Factor (in the absence of that silly drone, C. Robertson), an excellent and truly upright Canadian Highlander.

"Rowand is an English Canadian—a generous warm-hearted man, brave as a lion, and fiery as gunpowder. He is Chief of the Saskatchewan, the most valuable and populous district in the country, and the most skilful Indian trader we have.

"Lewes is a fine honourable Englishman.

"Mackenzie is a well-meaning, warm-hearted, but passionate and crabbed old Highlander (whom you may have heard uncle George speak of, far back in the last century).

"Todd is a dry, but good jovial Irishman: it was he who fought with Barnston.

"Chief Trader Miles is accountant and winter

* The officers in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, are classed thus:

Clerks, receiving salaries of from 20*l.* to 100*l.* per annum.

Chief Traders, receiving emoluments equal to $\frac{4}{850}$ of the whole profits of the Company.

Chief Factors, receiving emoluments equal to $\frac{8}{850}$ of the whole profits of the Company.

chief of the Factory. He is a good-hearted Englishman, very able at the desk, but eternally grumbling; and his judgment is no deeper than his inkstand. He has given notice that he will go home on furlough next year; and there have been many hints thrown at me regarding this situation; but I have done and said every thing to steer clear of it, as I could not endure the wretched climate and inactive life.

"Next to Miles in the Factory is Mr. Hargrave, who manages the stores: a good, able, deep-thinking, and deeply-read Scotchman from the banks of the Tweed — my most intimate friend in the country, and likely to become a very leading man. There are, besides, three or four understrappers, who are not worth notice.

"There were only three Senior Clerks here this season. The first, John Tod, is a good lowland Scot, and a very experienced trader, having been many years in that starving but valuable district, New Caledonia. He is a man of excellent principle, but vulgar manners.

"The second, Richard Grant, is Mr. Rowand's right-hand man, a jolly, humorous Scotch Canadian, and quondam officer of militia; likewise, a very experienced trader, but rather scampish, which retards his promotion.

"The third is James Douglas, of highly re-

spectable English extraction, born, I believe, in the West Indies; an honourable, determined fellow, much liked—and, I think, will be one of the four new Chief Traders next year.

"But I imagine I have tired you out, as I have done myself, and could not proceed further in this strain without giving you a general biography of the whole country.

"If the Governor does not come out again, I have no idea who will step into his shoes. Old Keith is a dried spider: good heavens! what a Governor! I wish I were five years older: in every other respect, without vanity, I feel myself perfectly competent to the situation; and, with one or two exceptions, hold the abilities of our *wigs* in utter contempt. This season I have been intimate with many of them—have, in the Governor's absence, had much to do with the general business, and see how easily these men can be led."

CHAPTER VII.

Description of Red River Colony.—Letters to the Author.

It may be interesting to quote from my brother's own description of the secluded and almost unknown little colony of Red River,

"Situated under the 50° of North Latitude, and 97° of West Longitude, at an elevation of eight or nine hundred feet above the sea, and stretching for upwards of fifty miles along the wooded borders of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers which flow through a level country of vast extent, it possesses a salubrious climate and fertile soil; but summer frosts generated by undrained marshes sometimes blast the hopes of the husbandman, and the extremes of abundance and want are experienced by an improvident people. Horses, horned cattle, hogs, and poultry are exceedingly numerous: wheat, barley, oats, potatoes, turnips, and most of the ordinary culinary vegetables thrive well; pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers, come to maturity in the open air in favour-

able seasons; maize, peas, and beans have not been extensively cultivated; hops grow luxuriantly; flax and hemp are poor and stunted; orchards are as yet unknown.

The banks of the river are cultivated to the width of from a quarter to half a mile. All the back level country remains in its original state—a vast natural pasture covered for the greater part of the year with cattle, and also furnishing the inhabitants with a sufficiency of coarse hay for the support of their herds during the winter.

The length of this severe season exceeds five months; the rivers usually freezing in November and opening in April, when there is a fine sturgeon fishery; but Lake Winipeg, the grand receptacle of the river waters, does not break up till the close of May. The most common sorts of wood are oak, elm, poplar, and maple: pines are likewise found towards Lake Winipeg. Fire-wood is rafted down the rivers from above the limits of the colony during summer, or transported on sledges when the snow falls; but as this essential article, is now, through waste and neglect, growing less plentiful, many of the inhabitants have provided themselves with cast-iron stoves, which occasion a much less consumption of fuel.

The two principal churches, Protestant and Roman Catholic, the gaol, the Company's chief

buildings, the Bishop's residence, and the houses of some retired officers of the fur-trade are built of stone, which is brought from a considerable distance. The generality of the settlers dwell in frame or log houses, roofed with wooden slabs, bark, or shingle; and for the most part washed or painted externally. Not a man, however mean or idle, but possesses a horse, and they vie in gay carioles, harness, saddles, and fine clothes. A great abundance of English goods is imported both by the Company and by individuals in the Company's annual ships to York Factory, and disposed of in the colony at moderate prices. Labour is dear, and produce of all kinds sells at a higher rate than could be expected in such a secluded place.

The bulky nature of such exports as could be furnished—a long and dangerous navigation to Hudson's Bay—but above all the roving and indolent habits of the half-breed race who form the mass of the population, and love the chase of the buffalo better than the drudgery of agriculture or regular industry—seem to preclude the probability of this colony rising to commercial importance.

The currency of the place consists in the Company's notes, with a small amount of silver and copper coin. Fifteen wind and three water

mills grind the wheat and prepare the malt of the inhabitants, who use neither barley nor oats in bread. Of all these mills two only have been erected by a Roman Catholic, a gentleman in the Company's pay as Warden of the Plains; the rest are in the hands of the Protestants, who constitute but two-fifths of the population—(which is in all about five thousand souls).

It may be remarked that while not a few of the children by native women of the Company's retired European servants, who are chiefly Orkney men, inherit the plodding, careful disposition of their fathers, the half-breed descendants of the French Canadians, are, with rare exceptions, characterized by the paternal levity and extravagance, superadded to the uncontrollable passions of the Indian blood. Many of the industrious Scotch, who first planted the colony, in 1811, under the auspices of the late Earl of Selkirk, have saved handsome sums of money, besides rearing large families in rustic plenty. A considerable portion of this valuable class, however, dreading the predominance and violence of the half-breeds, with whom they have avoided inter-marrying, have converted their property into money and removed to the United States.

There are here two Protestant clergymen, a

Roman Catholic bishop,* and three priests from Canada. These self-denying men are exemplary in their lives, and zealous and indefatigable in their benevolent labours, among the fruits of which may be reckoned the conversion of a great number of Indians of the Cree and Saulteaux or Chipeway nations. The Reverend Mr. Cockran (protestant clergyman) has provided schoolmasters for the native children, and built places of worship at the lower extremity of the colony where he regularly officiates. He has constructed a windmill for the Indians, assists them in erecting

* The Bishop (a French Canadian) made a tour in Europe in the year 1836, with the view to collect funds for the completion of a cathedral which he had begun a few years before on a very extensive scale, hoping to complete it by the assistance of his flock. They, however, had but little money to give, and as little inclination to contribute their labour for the advancement of the sacred edifice.

His Lordship reports of his tour, that he collected abundance of relics, crosses, and beads in Italy; that in France the *faithful* were liberal in their donations of pictures and vestments; but that in England only were his applications for *substantial* contributions (the sinews of church building as of war) followed by a result.

A more jolly, portly looking man than Monseigneur L'Evêque de Juliopolis will not be readily met with. Friar Tuck was, in size, a baby compared with him! That he labours with zeal, judgment, and discretion for the advancement of the temporal as well as the spiritual interests of his diocese, is testified by every one acquainted with him and it.

their wooden houses, and with his own hand sets the example of industry;—at the other extremity of the colony, M. Belcour, one of the Roman Catholic priests, with untiring zeal, conducts a location of Saulteaux Indians on a smaller scale.* I wish I could add, that the improvement of the Aborigines is commensurate to these beneficent cares. But, unhappily, the experience of Canada, of the United States, of California,

* The Catholic and Protestant Missionaries at Red River labour in the work of Christianization without much rivalry or opposition to each other. But, unfortunately, it is not so in all parts of this extensive wilderness; where assuredly there ought to be "ample scope and verge enough" for all whose real object is to preach Christ crucified, and him only. I shall relate two instances of this hurtful rivalry which have come under my own observation.

A Wesleyan clergyman from Canada passed the winter of 1838-39, at the western extremity of Lake Superior. The Indians were all but pagans; they had once seen and received baptism from a Catholic priest stationed about a hundred miles off.

The Wesleyan laboured assiduously, and began to have a numerous congregation whom he diligently instructed. The Priest heard of this; he considered the poor natives as adherents of the Pope, and he couldn't afford to lose them without a struggle. He would not venture among them himself; but he despatched one of his acolytes; and to ensure his success furnished him with a fearful picture, representing the Enemy of Mankind (the bad *Manitou*) busily employed in forking Protestants into the burning pit. This piece of "pictorial preaching" had such an effect, that the worthy Wesleyan

in short of all parts of North America, where the experiment of ameliorating the character of the Indian tribes by civilization has been tried, is renewed at Red River. Nothing can overcome their insatiable desire for intoxicating liquors; and though they are here excluded from the use of spirits, and the settlers are fined when detected in supplying them with ale, yet, they too often contrive to gratify that

could never afterwards muster another meeting; and loud were his subsequent denunciations of "The Woman of Babylon," "The Scarlet Lady," "Antichrist," &c.

A somewhat similar occurrence took place in "Oregon."

The Protestants (American missionaries) had first occupied the field. French Canadian priests arrived a few years afterwards, and soon gained great ascendancy over the natives by the distribution of a "biblical tree," showing, pictorially, many of the Old Testament events, the coming of our Lord Jesus and the subsequent progress of His church until those pestilential heretics Luther and Calvin, verged from the straight narrow way leading to salvation, into a crooked road which (so the picture shadowed) led them and their followers to eternal fire. This had wonderful effect; and the Protestant brethren tried in vain to regain the lost ground, by exhibiting an antagonist tree, showing the gradual divergence of Rome from the right path. Truly it becomes every true Christian to pray, that the time may speedily come when it will be felt by all, that religion

"Is *not* for sect and creed to fight,
To call our zeal the rule of right;
When what we wish is, at the best,
To see our church excel the rest."

debasing inclination, to which they are ready to sacrifice every thing they possess. They feel no gratitude to their Benefactors or spiritual teachers: and while they lose the haughty independence of savage life, they acquire, at once, all the bad qualities of the white man, but are slow, indeed, in imitating his industry and his virtues. Yet among the native tribes there exist marked distinctions. The Swampy Crees, who have long been employed in the Company's service at York Factory and other places, adopt steady habits with far greater facility than the proud Saulteaux, who contemptuously term the settlers "gardeners and diggers of the ground."

A few extracts from my brother's letters to me will convey his opinions regarding the condition and management of the settlement.

"Our plans of colonization are so wild and unfortunate, and the Company's business is tortured by so many, and such strange changes, that as a man of business I feel but little satisfaction in it. We have shepherds, shepherdesses, and dogs numberless come out. But the wolves have been ravaging the flocks—the tallow trade is broken up, and the experimental farm be-devilled. All that sort of thing, to be permanent, must be done by the settlers themselves; but the business here is

tagged together in the most strange and unsatisfactory manner. For instance the new Fort* recently erected is already nearly abandoned, and another new Fort (certainly much needed) to be built here at the forks, which are now the head quarters, and the true centre of the settlement in a geographical and every other point of view.

"We have abundant crops and provisions from the plains this year, money and meat are abundant, and that is all that can be said of the place; discomfort, isolation, prodigality, idleness, and immorality with its concomitant pleasures, complete the picture. The bulk of our population are of too roving habits, ever to make farmers, and prefer hunting the buffalo, or wielding the oar and the paddle, to remaining at home during the summer season."

"March 7, 1834.

"This place is a large stone establishment, that has cost us a good few thousands, and is yet unfinished: we are making preparations to build a large granary and provision store this summer, unless the work be stopped. The Big-wigs at home are rather cool on the subject, and I do not wonder at it. You can have no idea of the

* It may be noticed that every establishment, should it consist only of a couple of log huts entirely unprotected, is denominated a "Fort" in Hudson's Bay.

curious position the Company holds here. The land of the colony, and the right of the government, is Lord Selkirk's, by grant from the Company; and until 1826, the executors of the late Earl had a separate establishment, with a governor of their own; but since then, their affairs have been managed exclusively by the Hudson's Bay Company, the Hudson's Bay Factor has been their governor, and the Hudson's Bay fort their place of business; but they sell the land at twelve shillings and sixpence per acre, and pocket the money,—a very cheap and convenient method you will say. It is true they keep about a score of policemen in pay; but this force is a mere nonentity, and the Hudson's Bay Company have virtually to act as judge, jury, and jailor in his Lordship's colony. The only good thing I see in the matter, is, that they give me a salary of twenty-five pounds for keeping their accounts.

"A band of fellows have just arrived for a squadron of oxen we are to send across Lake Winipeg, to give a lift to that d——d winter road, that has been conceiving for the last seven years, but has as yet brought forth nothing."

CHAPTER VIII.

Extracts from Letters to the Author.—Difficulties with Half-breed Natives.—Intercourse with the Author.—Captain Back's Arctic Expedition.

"13 June, 1834.

"YOUR confounded express canoe, if there is one, is so long coming, that we have lost all patience, and are going about like "roaring lions;" all our loaded boats are off weeks ago; Mr. Mc Millan starts in a few hours for Canada; and Mr. Christie and myself have fixed the fifteenth as our ultimatum. Surely the cholera has not carried off the whole of Canada; or, if so, why did'nt you let us know, that we might all go down and inherit the land?

"I wrote you so fully in March, that I declare I haven't a word more to say; the only news is a bit of a row we had at the forks the other day, with Sioux and Saulteaux, which Mr. Mc Millan will give you an account of, as it is absolutely too long for anything short of a pamphlet.*

* The following narrative of the affair, not being quite so long as a pamphlet, I shall quote it entire:—

"Some of the incidents connected with the first visit of

"Thanks to our firmness, the poor Sioux got off safe, in defiance of the treacherous Saulteaux, with whom they came to make peace.

"The chief is a fine fellow and very shrewd too,

Sioux may be worth narrating, as illustrative of savage passions. A party of six-and-thirty men, headed by a daring chief called "The Burning Earth," in consequence of some disgust which originated across the lines, resolved to brave the implacable hatred of the Saulteaux, through whose country they must pass, and pay a visit to the British settlement. Being obliged to leave their horses on the way, they marched during the night, and reached undiscovered the woody banks of the Red River, a short distance above the remotest houses. There they lay concealed for several days; and, being almost naked, suffered much from cold and hunger. At length, one of them venturing out to the bank of the stream, observed on the opposite side a half-breed, named Baptiste Parisien, whom he recognized. This man had travelled through the Sioux territories, and served, it is said, in the United States' cavalry against the Sacs and Foxes. Parisien instantly invited the stranger to his house; and the latter, plunging into the river, swam across to him. He told his story, and Parisien generously proceeded with a canoe to ferry over the whole party.

"He lodged them, collected his friends to protect them from their enemies, and sent a messenger to the Company's central Establishment at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers to report their arrival and desire an interview. Chief Factor Christie, the Governor of the colony, acceded to their request; and Parisien conducted them, under a strong escort, to Fort Garry. There a conference was opened with great form and gravity. The Sioux declared that the object of their hazardous journey was to transfer their trade to the British, and to that end make a lasting peace with the Saul-

e. g., he saw me with a nice new gun in my hand; and did'nt the fellow take it into his head to make me a present of his calumet? I could do no less than give him my gun in return,

teaux. Mr. Christie replied that they, being American citizens, the Company could not gratify them in the first particular; but that he was most anxious to promote a cordial reconciliation between them and their ancient enemies. I was particularly pleased with the speech of a grim old warrior, called the 'Black Eagle.' After describing their state of perpetual hostility with the Saulteaux, 'In our plains,' said he, 'every stock, every stone is taken for an enemy. These fears can no longer be endured: let the Sioux and the Saulteaux smoke the calumet of peace; let them hunt the buffalo together, and let them henceforth be one nation.' Another orator, of a more lively mien, concluded the harangue by begging a drink of firewater (rum); 'for,' said he, 'I love it better than ever I did my mother's milk.' As second officer, I assisted Mr. Christie during the interview, and officiated at the same time as French interpreter, that being the language of the only capable Sioux speaker at the place. At the close of the 'palaver, the 'Burning Earth' presented Mr. Christie and myself with ornamented pipes, and I handed him the gun I carried in return. His people then entertained us in the open air with their national dances, which are more animated than most Indian exhibitions of this sort. The Coryphœus — a humorous little fellow—was really amusing. His place was on the outside of the ring; and, as he moved round the dancers, he saluted each with a smart lash of a thong on the bare back, and immediately after sounded a shrill whistle with a look of malicious drollery.

"All went on pleasantly enough till the evening; when a large party of Saulteaux, from the River Assiniboine, galloped suddenly into the court. They were completely armed,

and thus I am fairly outwitted by an Indian; see what it is to have 'hedication.'"

I had the delight of again meeting with my beloved brother on the last day of the year, 1834.

and breathed fury and revenge, having lost forty of their relatives by an attack of the Sioux a year or two before. We instantly stationed a strong guard around the building, and despatched messengers summoning the police and able-bodied settlers to the defence of the strangers who had thrown themselves on our hospitality. A sufficient number arrived in the course of the night to prevent any violent attempt being made. The Saulteaux, continually augmenting, were so irritated at being repulsed from the windows, through which they sought to fire upon the unfortunate Sioux within, that they turned upon some of Parisien's followers, and blood had well nigh been spilled. The great difficulty now was, to get the strangers safely home again. We supplied them with provisions, tobacco, and some clothing, and also ammunition for their defence, in case of their being attacked beyond the bounds of the colony.

"They concealed their alarm, put on a resolute countenance, sung their death-song; and the chief, unsheathing his sabre, smote the bare shoulders of his followers with the flat side of the blade.

"After this ceremony, they declared their readiness to depart, and were led out between two lines of the police and the settlers to the boats which were in readiness to convey them across the river.

"The Saulteaux, who were on the watch, now endeavoured to press forward, but were driven back, and we disarmed a great many of them. Parisien and his half-breeds undertook to conduct the Sioux safely out into the open plains, where they might set their bush-fighting foe at defiance. The party had no sooner crossed the river, than a number of the Saul-

Dissatisfied with the prospect which I saw before me, of a monotonous winter's residence at Moose Factory, (southern extremity of Hudson's Bay,) I 'took my foot in my hand,' started

teaux threw themselves into their canoes on the Assiniboine a little distance above, with the view to intercept their retreat.

"Observing this manœuvre, I ran towards them, followed by Mr. M'Kinlay and a few others; and, levelling our guns at the men in the canoes, ordered them to turn back. They angrily complied; when the principal man, seeing that we were but a handful, began to vent threats against us: but a party opportunely riding up to our assistance, we carried the old fellow with us to the Establishment, and his followers dispersed.

"Parisien sent us word next day that though some ambuscades were laid, he had seen the Sioux clear of the woods, after which they had little difficulty in returning to their own country about Lac Travers.

"I regret to add that this gallant fellow was, three years afterwards, shot through the heart in the *mêlée* of a buffalo-hunt.

"On the second occasion the Sioux came in double numbers, better armed, and led by Ulāněta, the greatest chief of their whole nation.—He was distinguished by a sort of coronet, or cap of feathers, and a necklace of grizzly bears' claws, with the unromantic addition of a pair of green spectacles! He is a tall elderly man, with a mild, almost a benignant, expression of countenance. Yet he is said to be one of the fiercest warriors in all the plains. He was obeyed with respect; and some of his people seemed expressly appointed to maintain order amongst the rest. The whole party wore painted buffalo robes. They were, as before, hospitably received, and dismissed with gifts, but under strict injunctions not to repeat their troublesome and perilous visits."

from that place in October, and reached Red River on the 31st of December, after a journey of no little hazard, fatigue, and privation.

I found the colony in high excitement. Rapid increase of numbers, from a continual influx of retired servants with their native families, had caused the half-breed class of the population, to become mutinous and insolent. This class has ever entertained a deep hatred against the whites, —a feeling in which the pure aborigines of but very few tribes participate.

This rancorous feeling, at all times existent, had recently been roused to increased bitterness, by some trivial changes in the mode of transacting business; and there wanted only a slight cause to call it into action.

That cause had been found two days before I arrived. A young Canadian, half-breed, had come half drunk into my brother's office, and insisted upon having money for his holiday diversions. He had, already, received in advance a considerable part of his pay for the succeeding summer, and was refused any further advances. The fellow, who had been my brother's voyaging servant, grew insolent; he was ordered out; refused to obey, and my brother proceeded to eject him; he resisted, and got the worst of the scuffle, coming off with a black eye and a bloody nose.

This very trivial affair was magnified into a *class* affront, the half-breeds assembled in great numbers, and in high excitement. Even those of the colonists, who had only a sixteenth part of Indian blood in their veins, some of them educated in the civilized world, linked themselves with the Canadian *Bois Brûlés*.* The storm was not met with spirit and promptitude on the part of Governor Simpson. Instead of putting on a bold front, which would soon have cowed these blusterers, he entered into negotiation with them — receiving their deputies and sending missions to their meetings. At these nocturnal meetings, they danced the war dance of their maternal ancestors, in order to keep their dastardly spirits up to the mark of bullying and threatening.

Even the demand made by them, that my brother should expiate his imputed or imagined offence by receiving a public flogging, could not rouse this vacillating plausible man, to a resolution of defiance, which every one knew might, with the utmost safety, have been given. His only step was a tampering negotiation with a neighbouring Indian chief, which being an attempt to set class against class, excited the half-

* A Canadian term for persons with any of the Indian blood in their veins.

breeds still more; and finally he succumbed so much to their menaces, as to give them a barrel of rum, and a sum of money as an expiation.* He moreover intimated his intention of removing my brother from the colony; but my brother at once stated, that if he was removed from his position under such circumstances, it would be a censure upon his conduct; his conduct had been such as he conceived did not expose him to reprehension; and if the intention intimated were persevered in, he should at once

* That the *Bois Brûlés* did not fail to profit by this acknowledgment of their strength, may be judged from the following extract from my brother's letter of August, 1836: "Our York trip men (Red River half-breeds) mutinied at Norway House, and came on here instead of returning to the Factory; but the priests and the public shamed them out of their conduct, (a poor species of law, you will say,) and they all started again yesterday to fulfil their duty.

"It appears that about half of the men took an oath on the way up, that they would not return to York; and the story goes, that the oath was sworn round a very large cask of the Bishop's sacramental wines, which formed part of their cargo, and had received many curses at each portage as they came along. This little circumstance, almost laughable as it may appear, has had an excellent effect in rousing the anger of the priests against their rebellious and sacrilegious parishioners, whom they lectured most severely from the pulpit on the subject, absolved them from their rash and guilty vow; and, aided by the public voice and Mr. Christie's persuasions and threats, so worked upon them, that they became quite ashamed of their behaviour."

retire from the service. This was an alternative shrunk from.

On my arrival, my brother explained to me the position of affairs: he told me, that the half-breeds had no animosity personally towards himself; but had taken up this case as a convenient subject on which to pick a quarrel; that he thought an attempt at his assassination not unlikely—as some of the class would think but little of taking his life, knowing that blood once spilt, the savage feelings of their fellows would be excited beyond controul—that they would, in fact, execute what they had threatened (and some say sworn to), "that the plains of Red River will be once more red with the blood of white men."

He was determined not to flinch from his position or his duties on that account; but he felt bitterly his unprotected position during the night, when he slept distant from any other person of the establishment, without any guard but his favourite pointer—as the policy of concession went so far as to prevent any preparations for self-defence. This was our first topic, after a separation of nearly five years. We slept in the same room; securely barricaded the doors; borrowed, after nightfall, a few arms from the other members of the establishment; and, after some hours

of intercourse, such only as one blessed with such a friend and brother as I had, can enjoy—lay down to rest, determined at least to sell our lives dearly.

To the feeling engendered in the minds of the half-breeds by this affair, I attribute my brother's melancholy and premature death; for they have a revengeful unforgiving spirit, the "*odium in longum jaciens*," attributed to one of the worst characters of antiquity, and, under the excitement of class or personal animosity, will scruple at no wickedness that can with impunity be committed; while they will, with rare exceptions, shrink from any attack exposing themselves to danger.

I remained with my brother but ten days, having again to don my snow-shoes for a return promenade of one thousand four hundred miles; but this brief period of renewed association sufficed to raise in our breasts feelings of deeper love, truer appreciation, than had marked our previous intercourse. His subsequent letters to me, some of which I shall give in the sequel, are couched in terms of affection, which, to many will appear romantic, but which were the genuine outpourings of a heart overflowing with love, tenderness, and every manly virtue.*

* The following passage beautifully describes this feeling:

Of my own feelings it would be obtrusive to say much. I loved him as David loved Jonathan — his death inflicted on me a grief which time only aggravates.

We parted, alas! never to meet again — on the 11th of January, 1835, mutually comforting each other with the assurance, that this separation would not be so long as the previous one had been.

In 1836, he was selected for the task of Arctic Discovery. Previous, however, to entering upon any detail of his services in this field, it will be necessary to give a rapid review of the progress of exploration of the Northern parts of America, and of the different expeditions which had visited the Arctic Coast of that continent, which I do at some length in the following chapter, with the freedom that a traveller in the

"It is, indeed, inexpressibly delightful, after the cool and reserved demeanour I must assume in public, thus to unbosom myself to my dear, my only brother. It is distance and separation alone that can make us sensible of what value is he to whom every thought may be disclosed, with an assurance not only of confidence, but of responsive emotion. I pity and scorn the frigid hearts that are incapable of such things." Again: "I have found many ostensible friends in this country; but my naturally warm feelings have been sufficiently chilled and tutored to distrust the friendship of the world, (what is it at all compared with the love we bear each other?) and to base my hopes solely on conscious rectitude."

same region may safely assume, but with an earnest attempt at impartiality.

It may be remarked as a singular circumstance that Arctic Discovery, for which it would appear as if my brother had trained himself by anticipation, and in which he was so enthusiastic when once he had entered upon it, had not excited his interest for many years after he went to America. I do not recollect of his ever expressing an opinion or wish on the subject; and on referring to his letters to me, in which his every thought and feeling are chronicled, I find reference but twice to the expedition of Captain Back; and these references are almost entirely to its influence on the affairs of the Company.

"19th June, 1833.

"Since our arrival here, I have been very busy, engaging men and assisting in the arrangements for Captain Back's expedition. These are now nearly completed, and the Captain may be off *as soon as he has written his letters.* He seems a very easy affable man; deficient, I should say, in that commanding manner with the people so necessary in this savage country. From my soul I wish them every success in the generous and humane objects of the expedition; but cannot venture an opinion upon its probable result."

"7th March, 1834.

"This packet conveys the news of Captain Back's discoveries, which are greater than any of us in the North anticipated. All doubted the existence of Great Fish River; but he last fall went down that stream to within one hundred and nine miles of the Arctic Ocean. His canoe guide, (Dejarlois,) who brought his despatches, was here this morning, and gave me a long account of the route. Their head quarters this winter, are at Fort Reliance, eastern extremity of Great Slave Lake, whence the Captain last fall ascended a river, passed several lakes with intermediate portages at the height of land, and fell upon the southern branch of the river he was in search of. Here it was small and rapidous; but being joined by a larger stream flowing from the westward out of Rum Lake, (Lake Contwoyto of Hearne,) it became a noble river, which the advanced season alone prevented him from exploring to its outlet. The canoe party then returned, and found Dr. King and Chief Trader Alex. R. Mc Leod, who had come on with the boats and supplies, comfortably established at Fort Reliance.

"Captain Ross's return will, no doubt, act as a damper to Back's ardour; but still he has work enough left him for next summer; and in

1835, I suppose he will retrace his steps to England for his knighthood.

"It is really a shame to the Hudson's Bay Company, that they knew nothing of this river till Back came to find it for them. It will now become, I should hope, the channel by which the Company may draw out the riches of the large Peninsula, "Boothia," discovered by Captain Ross, and described by him as abounding in furs."

CHAPTER IX.

Progress of Exploration of the Northern Parts of America—Summary of Journeys to the Arctic Coast of America, viz., Hearne's to the Mouth of the Coppermine River — Mackenzie's Descent to the Arctic Ocean — Franklin's First Expedition — Franklin's Second Expedition — Ross's Expedition to Prince Regent's Inlet — Back's Expedition in Search of Ross — Back's intended Survey from Wager River — King's contemplated Expedition — What had been done, and what remained to be done.

THE first internal explorers of the vast region of country forming the northern portion of the American continent were traders from Canada, while it was yet in the possession of France.

Soon after the first colonization of that province, hardy and daring individuals, lured by the great gains to be derived from traffic with the natives, and by the unbridled licence which in such a country they could practise with impunity, penetrated for hundreds of miles into the wilderness, then, as now, known in Canada as "the Indian country."

The exploits of these men are unchronicled; no Washington Irving has narrated them. Intrinsically, they possess infinitely more of romantic interest than belongs to the proceedings of the ill-selected conductors of the Astorian Enterprise, to which that eloquent writer has given an enduring, but by no means merited, celebrity.

In small parties, they penetrated among hostile Indians, without any previous knowledge of their country or character. Their dangers were often imminent, their disasters not unfrequent, and their privations, arising alike from the nature of the country they entered upon, and their own careless improvidence, great beyond description.

Though they were illiterate men, their charts of the country in which they traded were of extraordinary accuracy.*

The French Canadian Government, which, from policy and inclination, took much interest in the welfare of the Indian tribes, seeing the

* A few years ago, an Expedition, under the command of English engineer officers, was sent by the Canadian Executive to explore the interior country between the Ottawa and St. Maurice rivers. Rough charts, found in the archives at Quebec, drawn nearly two hundred years before by "Coureurs du bois," were found to correspond in a most extraordinary degree with the positions ascertained by astronomical observation.

evils that arose from the unrestrained proceedings of these wild adventurers, took steps to put the trade on a sounder footing, by preventing any from entering upon it, except those furnished with Government licences. Religious bodies, also, were encouraged by grants and privileges from the kings of France to enter upon the great work of converting and civilizing the Indians; and missionaries, earnest as those of the Jesuit body have ever been for the propagation of the faith, penetrated in advance of the traders, enduring with patience and resignation privations and dangers even greater than those to which they exposed themselves. The records of the Jesuit College, now in the archives of the Government of Canada, (its property having been confiscated and the order broken up, previous to the conquest by Britain,) contain narratives of these enthusiastic men which may yet afford a rich mine of "truth stranger than fiction."

Canadian traders had, previous to the conquest, ascended the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers to their sources, and had formed establishments on the Great Lakes. From the north-western end of Lake Superior, they threaded the intricate communication which leads by Lakes, Streams, and Portages, to Lake Winipeg,

and from thence penetrated some distance up the Saskatchewan river — the Misisippi of the North.

Their most distant establishment was on the banks of that river in lat. 53°, long. 103°. This place was situated at a distance of upwards of two thousand miles from the colonized part of Canada, the route to it was through a country occupied by numerous savage tribes, where the means of subsistence were scanty, and the navigation unfit for any other craft than frail birch-bark canoes — yet we have evidence that, at these distant establishments, considerable improvements were effected; that agriculture was carried on, and even wheel carriages used; in fact, that they then possessed fully as many of the attendants of civilization as they do now, after the lapse of a century.*

These enterprises were, in a great measure, suspended by the struggle which ended in the conquest by Great Britain of Canada; and, for some years after the treaty, by which that province was annexed to the British crown, the fur trade, and consequent exploration of the Indian country, was almost entirely neglected.

It was not till 1767 that a party, headed by

* The present establishment is within one hundred miles of the position of the old French establishment.

a British subject, again penetrated to the Saskatchewan; but the rich rewards which he won by his adventure attracted others to the field.

In 1775, the Misinipi, or English River, was visited by Mr. Joseph Frobisher. In 1776, that gentleman's brother penetrated to Isle à la Crosse (lat. 55° 26').

Mr. Pond, in 1778, advanced three hundred miles further into this *terra incognita*, and established himself within thirty miles of the Athabasca Lake.

In 1781, a permanent establishment was formed at the same point.

These explorations were the result of the individual enterprise of traders from Canada. They were prompted solely by the desire for gain. The adventurers who conducted them had no scientific knowledge or acquirements; and their proceedings were adopted solely on the information which their residence among the Indians enabled them to obtain regarding still more distant countries yet unvisited.

In 1783, the leading individuals concerned in this commerce, foreseeing that rivalry was injurious to the interest of all; and rightly judging that in such enterprises there was a necessity for united action, formed themselves into an

association under the title of "The North-West Company."

This energetic body continued in existence for thirty-eight years, during the greater part of which period it monopolized the fur trade of the interior parts of North America—extending its establishments to the Arctic Circle and Pacific Ocean.

Flushed with success, it founded trading posts even on the coast of Hudson's Bay. The Hudson's Bay Company, although armed with a chartered right to the exclusive right of trade with the Indians, not only along that coast, but over all the countries whose waters fall into Hudson's Bay, (a right which includes the greater part of the Indian country,) confined its trading stations almost entirely to the coast. In 1774, more than a century after the date of its charter, its furthest advance was but four hundred and fifty miles inland, (its Canadian rivals receiving their annual supplies from points more than two thousand miles distant,) and it was not till nearly thirty years afterwards that it adopted the policy of vigorously contesting the trade with them.

After a contest, to which I have already adverted, which was marked by great bitterness of feeling, considerable excitement, much menace, and some violence and loss of life, a coalition of

the stocks of both Companies, (the chartered privileges of one being thrown into the scale,) was effected in 1821.

HEARNE'S JOURNEY TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

THE first European who penetrated through the northern parts of America to the Arctic Ocean, was Mr. Samuel Hearne, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The report of the Northern Indians, who, previously to the establishment of the Canadian traders in the Athabasca country, annually carried their furs to Churchill, on Hudson's Bay—had caused the governor of that establishment to believe in the existence of a fine river at no very great distance, the course of which was to the northward, and on the banks of which large quantities of copper, in almost a pure state, were to be found.

On representing this to the Hudson's Bay Company, he was authorized to send an officer on a visit of exploration to this promising field.

Mr. Samuel Hearne was the officer selected for this service. He seems to have been well qualified in physical capability of enduring fatigue and privation for such an enterprise; but his astronomical knowledge extended no further than to the mechanical operation of "taking the

sun" for the latitude. This he could do, it may be presumed, correctly, when he was furnished with a good instrument; but his Hadley's quadrant, "with a bubble attached to it for an horizon, and made by Daniel Scatlif, of Wapping," was broken before he had advanced far; and though he returned and procured from the establishment "an old Elton quadrant, which had been upwards of thirty years at the fort," he might as well have been without this superannuated instrument—for his observations are, in some cases, nearly five degrees wrong.

It may be fairly doubted whether these were not intentional errors. He went a great way: was in conscience obliged to give an unfavorable report to his employers of the result of his mission, and may perhaps have thought, that, adding "a handful of degrees" to his journey, could do no harm to others, whatever good it might do to himself.

These errors have been fully proved and exposed by subsequent explorers; and, indeed, were more than suspected by parties under whose notice his journal came before it was published. But, nothing daunted by their remarks, he published his narrative to the world, and sticks fast to his statement, that he found the mouth of the Coppermine River in lat 71°. 54'.

His journal is, certainly, constructed as if he were himself fully aware of this mis-statement in latitude, (longitudes, of course, could not have been expected from him,) and wished, by a confused and disjointed narrative, to bewilder his reader, so that he could in no ways correct him by an approximated estimate of his courses and distances.

It is certain, however, that he did reach the mouth of the Coppermine River, and that in attaining to and returning from that point, he suffered much fatigue and privation. A short sketch of his proceedings may not be uninteresting.

He took his departure from Churchill, (the most northern establishment on the shores of Hudson's Bay,) on the 6th of November 1769; his immediate companions being two Orkney men, and two Indians; while "Captain Chawchinchaw,* his Lieutenant Nabyah,* and six or eight northern Indians had particular orders to conduct him, provide for him, and assist him in everything until he reached the borders of the Athapuscow Indians' country, where Captain Motonabee was to meet him in the spring of 1770, in order

* Indian Leaders.—It was the custom of the Hudson's Bay Traders to give such a laced coat, and call him "Captain" in compliment.

to conduct him to a river represented by the Indians to abound with copper ore, animals of the fur kind, &c., and which is said to be so far to the northward, that in the middle of the summer, the sun does not set, and is supposed by the Indians to empty itself into some ocean."

Captain Chawchinchaw proved a very broken reed whereon to lean for support and assistance. Ere they had been three weeks absent, Hearne sorrowfully chronicles, "that he had not the prosperity of the undertaking at heart;" and this want of cordiality exhibited itself plainly in his refusing to aid Hearne and his companions in the labour of carrying their own ammunition, articles for trade and clothing, and in leaving them to depend entirely on their own exertions for a supply of provisions. Finding that this kind of treatment would not rid him of his persevering companion, he caused some of his Indians to desert in the night with the greater part of the traveller's ammunition, &c. Of the perpetration of this theft, he, of course, pleaded entire ignorance; but he told Mr. Hearne, that it must necessarily, put an end to his further proceeding in his company, and "he and his crew packed up their awls on the 30th of November, and set out towards the south-west, making the woods ring with their laughter, and left us

to consider of our unhappy situation, near two hundred miles from Prince of Wales' Fort."

On Hearne's return, he fell in with Indians from whom he procured supplies of provisions, and he got safely back to Churchill on the 12th of December, to "his own great mortification, and the no small surprise of the Governor, who had placed great confidence in the abilities and conduct of Chawchinchaw."

Shortly after his return, an Indian called Connequesse, informed him, that he had been very near the river he was engaged to go in search of. This was an inducement to embark again on the enterprise; and little daunted by Captain Chawchinchaw's misconduct, Hearne again confided himself to Indian guidance, setting out on the 23rd of February, 1770, unaccompanied by a single European.

Striking across to the Seal River, they followed its course for several days, and travelling at the slow rate which Indians always adopt when they are in a country where provisions are abundant, they finally took up their quarters for the spring on the lake, forming the reservoirs of that stream; the guide declaring that it was yet too cold to walk on the *barren grounds*, and that the woods stretched west-south-west. Their stay here was marked by the usual vicis-

situdes of Indian house-keeping, sometimes too much—seldom just enough—frequently too little—and often none at all.

Again resuming their route on the 23rd of May, they kept to the northward: the march was toilsome in the extreme, for the snow was deep yet soft, and their luggage heavy to haul, and still more so to carry on the back. Hearne often suffered extremely from hunger—his guide was a perfect niggard of his provisions, and though he had a snug little tent he never asked his European charge to put his head into it. The rain was often heavy—the difficulty of lighting fires great; and so when they did kill an animal, they generally ate a great part of it raw. Raw venison or raw fish, Mr. Hearne could manage with some little satisfaction; but he reports the flesh of the Musk Ox as not only coarse and tough, but smelling and tasting so strong of musk, as to be very disagreeable—*when raw!*

On the 30th of June, they reached Yath Kyed Lake, near Chesterfield Inlet, and thence proceeded leisurely to the north-west. Deer were plentiful; his guide was in no hurry; and on being taken to task for not advancing quicker, he told our traveller that he had no design to take him to Coppermine River that summer, but intended to take him there the next; an

unexpected piece of information which was received with much composure. Indeed, Hearne seems to have had rather a liking for this kind of life; and while provisions are abundant, never complains of delay. The Deer here were so numerous, that though there were upwards of six hundred Indians collected together they all rioted in abundance.

By the 12th of August, they had advanced to lat. 63.° 10.′ north; and the distances given, and position in longitude stated, (from Churchill,) would indicate that they were but one hundred miles distant from Artillery Lake of Captain Back. There, an unfortunate accident befel our traveller: while eating his dinner, a sudden gust of wind blew down his quadrant, and "as the ground was very stony, the bubble, the sight vane and vernier were entirely broke to pieces, which rendered the instrument useless." Modern astronomers would be somewhat puzzled by the complex structure of this instrument.

Its loss determined his return to Churchill, which was attended with as much difficulty and vicissitude as the advance. It was the 25th of November, before Mr. Hearne reached that place, after having been absent eight months and twenty-two days on a fruitless, or at least an unsuccessful, expedition.

Two miscarriages did not daunt him—he volunteered to undertake a third expedition, and his offer was readily accepted, "as his abilities and approved courage," (so he writes,) "in persevering under difficulties, were thought no-ways inferior to the task."

He entered upon this journey under more favourable auspices; for he placed himself under the conduct of Matonabee, a leader of some importance among the Northern Indians, who purposed a journey—ostensibly for the purposes of trade, but really for the purpose of making war on the Esquimaux — to the river of which Hearne was instructed to make a survey.

On the 7th of December, 1770, the journey was begun. Mr. Hearne being unaccompanied by either European, or home-guard Indian, in fact, entirely dependent on the good faith of Matonabee; and it may be justly said, that the confidence was not abused.

Their route lay through the barren grounds to North-lined Lake, (called by Hearne Island Lake,) which they reached on the 30th of December. Striking west from it, they travelled at a very easy rate; and having arrived, on the 16th of January, (1771,) among deer, they remained for several days drying and preparing provisions, of which Matonabee seems to have been, comparatively, a careful purveyor.

Continuing their journey on the 22nd, on the 6th of February they crossed the Cathawhachaga River; deer were too abundant for their rapid advance; it was the 21st before they reached Theyeholekyed Lake. Proceeding slowly to the southward, they took up their quarters on the 8th of April at Lake Thleweyazazeth; and knowing that on the banks of the river flowing out of it was the best point at which birch wood for tent-poles and sledges, and birch-bark for small canoes could be obtained, they tarried for the purpose of providing these necessaries.

Thence striking across to Clowey, they met a large number of Indians; and here a combination was formed by the more active and daring of the men, to go to the Coppermine River for the purpose of attacking the Esquimaux.* Mr. Hearne endeavoured to dissuade them from this intention, but he had no influence, and finding that they were firmly bent on the enterprise, he made no scruple about accompanying them.

They, accordingly, left all the women, children, dogs, heavy baggage, and other incumbrances,

* "An Esquimaux hunt" has always been a favourite diversion among the Border Indians. A decrepit Indian, who acted as cook at a station where I resided, often told me of the pleasure he enjoyed when an active youth in going on these expeditions.

and on the 1st of June started northward, and travelled with great speed. Whether Mr. Hearne left his quadrant among the other incumbrances he does not mention; but his subsequent statements of latitude are quite erroneous, and his narrative very confused. He states himself to have been, on the 16th of June, in lat. 67° 30′, (nearly that of the mouth of the Coppermine). He places himself on the 1st of July in lat. 68° 46′, (the position of Victoria and Wollaston lands in the Arctic Ocean). On the 13th of July, he reached the Coppermine River at about forty miles from its mouth; and he expresses his surprise and disappointment at finding it scarcely navigable for an Indian canoe, instead of according with the Indians' description of it—a fine river, navigable for vessels.

He, however, made a survey of it to its mouth, which he places in lat. 71° 54′. He acknowledges that he had no observation here; but states his confidence that, from the extraordinary care he took in observing the courses and distances from his last point of observation, the accuracy of latitude given may be depended upon within twenty miles at the utmost. At all events he saw before him the Great Arctic Ocean, a sight never before seen by European!

The search after copper was no less a disap-

pointment than the shallowness of the river. From Indian report he had been led to anticipate arriving at "hills entirely composed of that metal, all in handy lumps like a heap of pebbles;" but he found that he could collect even specimens with much difficulty. He secured one very fine one, a piece of pure copper, weighing about four pounds. His cursory search by no means disproves the existence of large quantities of pure copper in this distant region—a source of wealth could it be arrived at. Nor is it impossible that ere this century has passed, an organized system of internal communication, such as that which traverses Northern Asia, may place this valuable natural deposit within the reach of commerce.

Of the butchery committed by his companions on the poor Esquimaux at the Bloody Fall, I abstain from any recital. Mr. Hearne was a close and wonderfully unconcerned spectator of this most diabolical massacre, and describes it with painful circumstantiality.

Their return was by a more westerly route, though the obscurity of the narrative makes it difficult to trace the precise course followed.

On the 3rd of September they were at Point Lake—a part of the country visited subsequently by Franklin's Expedition. On the 24th of December they reached the Great Slave Lake. (Hearne

calls it the great Athapascow Lake.) Crossing it they proceeded some distance up the Slave River, and then struck off to the eastward. On the 28th of April they were at Thleweyazazeth, the place where they had prepared their birch-work twelve months before. And on the 29th of June, 1772, our traveller arrived in good health at Churchill, after having been absent eighteen months and twenty-three days, during which long period he had lived with the Indians—a mode of life to which it is wonderful how soon a European becomes reconciled.

That he pursued his object with pertinacious perseverance, and that he fully accomplished it, cannot be doubted; but his journey gave but very little correct knowledge of the geography of Northern America.

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE'S DESCENT TO THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, (subsequently for his American discoveries created Sir Alexander,) after being for a few years one of the conductors of an independent fur-trading association, became, in 1787, an acting partner of the North-west Company, and was immediately appointed to the management of its affairs in

Athabasca, the most northern division of country to which its trade extended.

His winter residence during 1788-9, was Fort Chipewyan, on Athabasca Lake, which may be termed the point of departure of every expedition which has yet been set on foot for Arctic discovery, with the single exception of the preceding bold attempt of Hearne. A still more northern establishment had been formed at Great Slave Lake.

Mr. Mackenzie, doubtless, obtained from the Indians who traded there and at Fort Chipewyan, a knowledge of the existence of a large river, flowing out of the Slave Lake; and being, he writes, "endowed by Nature with an inquisitive mind and an enterprising spirit, possessing also a constitution and power of body equal to the most arduous undertaking, and being familiar with toilsome exertions, he not only contemplated the practicability of penetrating across the continent of America, but was confident in the qualifications as he was animated by the desire to undertake this perilous enterprise; and the wishes of his particular friends and commercial associates contributed to quicken the execution of this favourite project of his own ambition."

It would appear from his narrative, that he

anticipated that the river flowing out of Great Slave Lake emptied itself into the Pacific Ocean; consequently he hoped by descending it to traverse the American continent.

He was disappointed in this expectation; for the noble river which he descended, and which bears his name, conducted him to the Arctic Ocean; but it is not surprising that he should have entertained such an expectation, for the river flows into Slave Lake from the west; and as he had no means of ascertaining its longitude, he might easily have placed it nearer the north-west coast of America than subsequent observations have proved it to be; moreover, Hearne placed the Arctic Sea five degrees further north than it really is, which might have deterred Mackenzie from endeavouring to reach it.

Mr. Mackenzie started on the 3rd of June, 1789, on his voyage from Fort Chipewyan, in a bark canoe manned by five men, two of whom were accompanied by their wives. He had also in company a smaller canoe, containing an enterprising chief of the Chipewyan tribe, *his* two wives, and two Indians.

Descending the Slave River, he reached Great Slave Lake on the 9th of June, and found it still partially covered with ice. This caused them

some detention, and its disruption was followed by strong winds, causing a heavy swell, which made the coasting of the lake a matter of no small risk and difficulty. The Indian guide whom he had employed was, also, but imperfectly acquainted with the situation of the river. From a combination of these causes, he did not commence his descent of the "Mackenzie River," till the 29th of June.

Once embarked on this noble stream—which has a course, unbroken by rapid or fall, of nearly eight hundred miles—the voyage was comparatively "plain sailing."

It is true the Indians, whom he saw on its banks, gave disheartening accounts of the immense distance at which lay the "Great Lake," and described with the fluency and circumstantiality in which no one can excel an Indian alarmist, (and out of their own immediate circle, all is alarm,) the monsters of horrid shape and destructive powers, whom he would encounter; nay, exaggerated into frightful falls and rapids—slight velocities in current, which their own small canoes descended in safety. But all this had little effect upon a man of such iron nerves as Mackenzie. He generally brought those *palavers* to a conclusion, by causing, partly by violence, partly by persuasion, one of the alarmists to

embark as guide of the party, until it should reach some other tribe.

He advanced so rapidly down this river, that, on the 10th July, he arrived at deserted Esquimaux encampments. On the 12th, he came to a large lake, which the Indians knew nothing about, further than that in it the Esquimaux killed large fishes.—*It was the Arctic Ocean he had reached!*

Next day, those large fishes, which proved to be *whales*, were seen disporting themselves, and Mackenzie, seized with a sudden *penchant* for making war upon the finny monsters, ordered his canoe out in pursuit of them; but, like his countryman, Hector Macintyre, in *his* attack on the *Phoca*,* he gained little by this movement. Having ventured beyond the islands he was overtaken by a squall, and regained Whale Island with much difficulty. Here he observed a rise of eighteen inches in the tide, but does not state whether he found the water salt or not. Subsequent expeditions, however, fully proved that he was quite correct in stating, that he had landed on an island in the Arctic Ocean.

His return was performed with the same ease and comparative absence of privation and risk,

* See "The Antiquary."

which marked his descent. On the 16th of July he commenced his homeward voyage. On the 2nd of August, he passed the confluence of the Great Bear Lake River, always inquiring of the Indians as he advanced for the great river flowing from the westward, which he supposed would lead him to the vicinity of Norton Sound (North Pacific coast).

On the 13th, he passed the River aux Liards, which did not attract his attention as likely to lead to the westward.* On the 22nd, he re-entered Great Slave Lake; and, in coasting it, he seems to have run greater risks than he had before done on his voyage. On one occasion, he made a traverse from point to point of twenty-four miles, a matter of much risk with a bark canoe in a lake so subject to storms.

On the 3rd of September, he commenced the ascent of the Slave River, and on the 12th reached his wintering quarters at Fort Chipewyan, after a journey, the result of which was highly important; while it was so conducted that no privations, fatigues, or dangers, other than those ever incident to travels in this hyperborean

* This is easily accounted for by the fact of its having a course, due north, for two hundred and fifty miles before its confluence with the Mackenzie.

region—were undergone by himself, his men, or their adventurous spouses, who so gallantly accompanied them.

Mr. Mackenzie afterwards made a journey across the continent, and reached the Pacific coast in lat. 52. This enterprise exposed him to far greater dangers, fatigues, and privations, than marked his descent to the Arctic Ocean; but he successfully surmounted them all. He afterwards took a leading part for several years in the fur trade, and, returning home, married, in a green old age, a young lady connected with our family. He was himself, a native of the Northern Highlands, and a marked similarity in many points of character, may be traced between him and my brother.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S FIRST EXPEDITION.

THE subject of Discovery on the Arctic coast of America, upon which, as we have seen, a dim light had been thrown by expeditions undertaken by two officers of the trading Companies, was, after the lapse of thirty years, taken up by the British Government.

In this interval, indeed, some further knowledge had been acquired by the progress to the north of the trading establishments which were now extended to the Mackenzie River.

The first Government expedition to survey the northern coast of America was organized in 1819, under the command of Lieut. (now Sir John) Franklin; an expedition by sea being at the same time sent out under the command of Lieutenant (now Sir Edward) Parry.

The objects of the Arctic Land Expedition are thus detailed in Franklin's published narrative: "My instructions in substance informed me, that the main object of the expedition was that of determining the latitudes and longitudes of the northern coast of North America, and the trending of the coast from the mouth of the Coppermine River to the eastern extremity of that continent. It was left for me to determine, according to circumstances, whether it might be more advisable to proceed at once, directly to the Northward till I arrived at the sea coast, and proceed westerly towards the Coppermine River, and from thence easterly till I should arrive at the eastern extremity of that Continent. That, as another principal object of the expedition was to amend the very defective geography of the northern part of North America, I was to be very careful to ascertain correctly the latitude and longitude of every remarkable spot upon our route, and of all the bays, harbours, rivers, headlands, &c., that might occur along the northern

shore of North America. That, in proceeding along the coast, I should erect conspicuous marks at places where ships might enter, or to which a boat could be sent; and to deposit information as to the nature of the coast for the use of Lieutenant Parry.

"I was instructed on my arrival at or near the mouth of the Coppermine River, to make every inquiry as to the situation of the spot from whence the copper had been brought down by the Indians to the Hudson's Bay establishment; and to visit and explore the place in question, in order that Doctor Richardson might be enabled to make such observations as might be useful in a commercial point of view, or interesting to the Science of Mineralogy."

The attempt to carry out those instructions exposed the officers who were appointed to the management of the expedition, and the men under their command, to trials and privations such as never have been exceeded, seldom, if ever, equalled.

Four officers were specially selected for this service, whose several characters promised an admirable adaptation for its prosecution.

The commander calm and temperate, but firm and persevering.

The second in command, Dr. Richardson, of

untiring energy, great resolution, and powerful bodily frame.

Mr. Hood (who unfortunately perished), a young man actuated by the noblest feelings, and of high acquirements.

Mr. (now Sir George) Back, whose subsequent efforts in the same field prove his abilities as a traveller.

But they laboured under two serious disadvantages,—disadvantages to which the disastrous result of their expedition was undoubtedly attributable. These were—First, Their utter unacquaintance with the country through which they had to pass, and with the modes of travelling and living therein.* All this they had to learn while

* It is in no invidious spirit, but in illustration of the above remarks, that I here contrast the different manner in which Captain Franklin and my brother got through with, and viewed the winter's journeys which brought them to Fort Chipewyan, the place which may be called the starting point of both expeditions.

Captain Franklin travelled from Cumberland House to Fort Chipewyan, a distance of eight hundred and fifty-seven miles in sixty nine days.

My brother travelled from Red River to Fort Chipewyan, a distance of one thousand two hundred and seventy-seven miles, in sixty-three days.

Captain Franklin thus chronicles his feelings on ending this initiatory trip: "Thus has terminated a winter's journey of eight hundred and fifty-seven miles, in the progress of which there has been a great intermixture of agreeable and disagree-

conducting the expedition, and the surprise which one who has any acquaintance with that country feels on perusing the narrative is, that they succeeded in advancing so far as they did, not that they should have endured such frightful sufferings on their return.

Second,—The disordered state of the Indian territories in consequence of the hot opposition carried on between the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies.

This rivalry, to which I have elsewhere alluded, was, at the period of this expedition, at its greatest

able circumstances. Could the amount of each be balanced, I suppose the latter would much preponderate: and amongst these the initiation into the practice of walking in snow shoes may be considered as prominent. The suffering it occasions can but faintly be imagined by a person who thinks upon the inconvenience of marching with a weight of between two and three pounds constantly attached to galled feet and swelled ankles; perseverance and practice only will enable the novice to surmount this pain."

My brother closes the narrative of his *run* with these words: "Thus happily terminated a winter's journey of one thousand two hundred and seventy-seven statute miles. In the wilderness, time and space seem equally a blank, and, for the same reason, a paucity of objects to mark or diversify their passage; but, in my real opinion, the secret of the little account which is made of distance in these North American wilds is, *that there is nothing to pay.* Every assistance is promptly rendered to the traveller without fee or reward; while health and high spirits smile at the fatigues of the way."

height. Captain Franklin was furnished with letters from the capitalists of both parties, instructing their subordinate agents to render the expedition every assistance. But the truth of the old proverb "between two stools," was fully exemplified in this case. The parties "haggled and higgled" as to which should bear the burden of supplying the expedition. Thus, in one instance, the officer of one Company left five valuable, almost indispensable, packages on the beach, because the canoes of the other Company had not a similar number; at another place no provisions were given by one party, while the other gave such as turned out unserviceable. Again, "the answer from the North West gentleman was satisfactory enough; but on the Hudson's Bay side I was told 'that any further assistance this season entirely depends on the arrival of supplies expected in a few weeks from a distant establishment.'"

The spirit of hostility was carried so far, that at one place where it was particularly desirable to have a conference with the leading officers of both Companies, on the plans of the expedition, it was necessary for Captain Franklin to pitch his tent half-way between the rival establishments, and to invite to this neutral ground, the dignitaries of the trading posts.

The expedition left Fort Chipewyan on the

11th of July, 1820, in three canoes made of birch bark. These were the only craft used at that time in the Indian territories; they are now almost entirely superseded by boats; but they were very unfit for Arctic navigation, for the bark of which they are formed, though tough and strong when floating in water of a moderate temperature, is extremely fragile and brittle when immersed in water of such a low temperature as that of the Arctic Ocean.

Difficulties were not wanting at the very outset; for operations were commenced with provisions for only one day's consumption. Thus the party was dependent on the produce of the chase and fishery for daily supplies of food: a dependance which effectually prevents a steady or rapid advance. Captain Franklin was, also, quite dependent on the reports of the Indians, for the regulation of his plan of the expedition. His original purpose was to have descended the Mackenzie River, to cross Great Bear Lake, and from the eastern end of that inland sea, (whose immense size was quite unknown at that time) to make a portage across to the Copper-mine River. His plan as formed, after duly considering the information given by the Northern Indians, was to cross Slave Lake, to ascend the Yellow-Knife River—a rapid stream falling

in from the north—to establish his winter station on a chain of small lakes, leading from the head waters of that stream, to the head waters of the Coppermine River; to descend that river in the spring, and then to proceed along the Arctic coast, with the hope of reaching Repulse Bay; a plan feasible in some respects, but quite impracticable in others.

They reached Fort Resolution on the 25th of July, where they obtained a small supply of provisions; crossed the Slave Lake, and reached Fort Providence (the last trading station) on the 29th; here they were again supplied with some provisions, and upon the 2nd of August, they launched upon the field of Arctic discovery. How they were provided for this bold enterprise may be judged from the following detailed inventory of their effects:—*Provisions*, two cases (fifty pounds each) of flour, two hundred Rein-deer tongues, some dried Moose meat, portable soup, and arrow-root, *sufficient in the whole for ten days' consumption*; besides two cases of chocolate, and two canisters of tea. The *stores* consisted of two barrels of gunpowder, one hundred and forty pounds' ball and shot, four fowling pieces, a few old trading guns, eight pistols, twenty-four Indian daggers, some packages of knives, chisels, axes, nails and fastenings for a boat, a few yards of

cloth, some blankets, needles, looking-glasses, and beads, together with nine fishing nets.

They followed the Yellow-Knife River until the 11th, ascending it a hundred and fifty-six miles, when they found that it dwindled into an insignificant rivulet. Now commenced a chain of small lakes, divided from each other by long portages; the fatigue of carrying the canoes and baggage across which, joined to a scanty supply of food, caused much discontent among the Canadian voyageurs.

On the 13th, they openly threatened to relinquish the expedition; the very same evening, however, a supply of deer's meat was brought in; they had got among the rein-deer. For several months afterwards, all hands lived in abundance; and Captain Franklin honourably chronicles of his Canadian companions, "that they never again reflected upon us as they had done before, for rashly bringing them into an inhospitable country where the means of subsistence could not be procured;" though frightful were the sufferings to which the inexperience of their officers exposed them.

The lake on which the winter establishment was built, was attained on the 19th of August. The name of Fort Enterprise was bestowed on this most northerly of his Majesty's establishments.

Two separate parties, during August and September, made visits of observation to the head-waters of the Coppermine River.

The establishment was well situated for a supply of provisions; deer being very abundant during the autumn. At the conclusion of the hunting season, the latter end of October, they had secured in the store-houses the carcasses of one hundred deer, with one thousand pounds of suet, and some dried meat, and had, moreover, eighty deer stored up at various distances from the house.

This would appear an ample supply; but the establishment was large — a Canadian's appetite is insatiable, and it may be fairly doubted, whether the officers were yet fully impressed with the necessity for rigid economy of provisions. The stock of ammunition was nearly expended in making this collection; and the receipt from the traders of the necessary supply of this article was so uncertain, that Mr. Back was despatched to Fort Chipewyan to negotiate for it. That this was not an unnecessary precaution may be judged from the fact already stated, that of ten packages forwarded from York Factory, five were wantonly left behind. The supplies which Mr. Back succeeded in obtaining were much less than was required; but to convey even the quantity

obtained on sledges to the establishment, caused much fatigue to the servants employed. Already, in March and April, starvation began to make its appearance at Fort Enterprise, and an encroachment was necessarily made on the stock reserved for the summer's voyage, yet not a murmur was heard from any one; and when the meals were reduced to one per day, (sometimes none at all,) the amusement of eating was replaced by that of sliding down natural "Montagnes Russes"—the excellent commander taking the lead, until he was disabled by a fat Indian woman running her sledge over him, and thereby severely spraining his knee. Their sole dependance was on the exertions of the Indian hunters; but doubts had already been instilled into their minds as to the *solvency* of the expedition, *i.e.* whether their promises to pay would be honoured—payment in hand could not be made from want of means. This led to much diplomatic intercourse between Captain Franklin and Akaitcho, the principal chief of the Copper Indians, in which the latter played "fast and loose," very barefacedly, and was brought to consent to accompany the expedition, only by the volunteering of some of his subordinates to go without him. Go he did, but with a bad will for his work.

The month of June 1821 was wholly consumed

in the transport of the canoes and baggage (provisions there were little, if any,) across the lakes forming the reservoirs of the Coppermine River,—a service of much fatigue and anxiety,—the whole being dragged over the ice, which, though still fast, was everything but firm. On the 14th of June, the last of the party started from Fort Enterprise. No one was left in the Establishment to collect provisions; and the sole dependance for finding any on their return, was placed on the promises of the Indians—a fatal error.

On the 2nd of July the party embarked on the waters of the Coppermine River in two bark canoes, and its descent to the sea occupied them until the 18th. They cursorily examined the Copper Mountains, but did not find so many indications of pure copper as they had anticipated. Some Esquimaux were seen towards the mouth of the river, but they were frightened and ran away at the appearance of the party; and the only individual of that tribe, with whom they entered into intercourse, was an aged man at the Bloody Fall, (the scene of the massacre by Hearne's companions,) who was too infirm to make his escape with his relatives. From him they obtained but very little information regarding the coast. The Indian hunters, alarmed at the sight of their ancient enemies the Esquimaux,

retreated from the Bloody Fall. Mr. Wentzel, a clerk of the N.W. Co.—who, with four Canadians —was employed to assist on the expedition was also sent back from this point (why they had been taken so far does not clearly appear): and on the 21st of July, the party, now reduced to twenty individuals, commenced their voyage on the hyperborean sea. They had provisions for but fifteen days, and their amunition consisted of only one thousand charges!

Their advance was impeded more by strong winds than by ice. By the 25th they had succeeded in advancing one hundred and thirty miles—to Cape Barrow; but, after passing this point, they, unfortunately, got involved in the intricacies of Bathurst's Inlet. This circuit of gulph from Cape Barrow to Point Turnagain,—the direct traverse being only about forty miles,—occupied from this date to the 18th of August, when it was resolved to discontinue the prosecution of the eastern voyage.

The result obtained by this expedition was the exploration of a line of Arctic Coast of one hundred and seventy statute miles; * the distance between the Coppermine River and Repulse

* I take the straight distances from point to point, without following the sinuosities of the coast.

Bay, the Point which it was proposed to reach, being eight hundred statute miles.

The season appears to have been very favourable. The strong winds which stopped the progress of their frail bark canoes, completely broke up the ice. Captain Franklin says, that "the ice would not have arrested a strong boat;" and enters into an exposition of his views in respect to the practicability of approaching the coast with vessels—a practicability which has never yet been disproved.

The return of the party was marked by frightful suffering and great loss of life. The plan proposed for the return was, to ascend Hood's River, and thence to strike across the country to Point Lake, expecting to find a supply of provisions collected at Fort Enterprise. Several of the party—the gallant young Hood among the rest—never reached this place, and those who did had the misery to find that no provisions had been deposited there. It would be painful to narrate the sufferings of the poor fellows who perished, and the still greater sufferings of those who survived; suffice it to say, that of the twenty individuals who embarked on the Arctic Sea, but ten returned; namely—three officers, the faithful seaman Hepburn, and six Canadians.

The officers returned to England in the Autumn of 1822; and Captain Franklin's published narrative of the services performed, and sufferings endured, met with general approbation and general sympathy.

CAPTAIN SIR JOHN FRANKLIN'S SECOND EXPEDITION.

SHORTLY after his return from the disastrous journey just described, Captain Franklin laid before His Majesty's Government a project for a renewed expedition to the same region.

The Government, though feeling a deep interest in the subject, for a little while hesitated again to expose its subjects to perils and privations, such as marked the first expedition; but its consent being once granted, it was followed by preparations on a most comprehensive and munificent scale.

The objects of the expedition were—

First, the exploration of the coast from the Mackenzie River to Icy Cape of Cook. This was to be attempted by one division under the personal command of Captain Franklin.

Second, the exploration of the coast between the Mackenzie and Coppermine Rivers; this branch of the service was to be entrusted to Dr. Richardson.

His Majesty's Ship Blossom, under the command of Captain Beechey, was despatched round Cape Horn, for the purpose of meeting Captain Franklin in Behring's Straits, and thence conveying him to the civilized world.

Nor was Dr. Richardson's party without the hope of falling in with vessels; for, at the same time that this overland expedition was organized, a maritime expedition, under the command of Captain Parry, was sent out for the purpose of discovering a north-west passage through Prince Regent's Inlet.

Men, boats, stores, and provisions were forwarded from England in the spring of 1824. The two former, *viâ* Hudson's Bay, the two latter partly by that channel, and partly through Canada —with the intention of their being at Fort Chipewyan in good season in 1825.

The four officers appointed to the expedition, namely, Captain Franklin, Dr. Richardson, Lieutenant Back, and Mr. Kendall, embarked from Liverpool for New York, on the 16th of February, 1825. Landing at that port on the 15th of March, they proceeded through the State of New York to Niagara; thence through the Canadian Territories to Penetanguishene on the shores of Lake Huron, to which place canoes for their northern voyage had been despatched from

Montreal the preceding autumn. This very expensive mode of proceeding enabled Captain Franklin and Dr. Richardson, who went on express from Lake Superior, to reach the Athabasca Lake, on the 15th of July. A few days afterwards, their men, boats, and stores, which had been forwarded by the route of Hudson's Bay the previous year, joined them; and on the 23rd the whole expedition was collected together, Lieutenant Back and Mr. Kendall arriving on that day with the loaded canoes left behind at Lake Superior.

Proceeding down Slave River to the Great Slave Lake, and thence descending the wide Mackenzie, they arrived on the 7th of August, 1825, at Fort Norman; and, it being early in the season, Captain Franklin determined on making a voyage to the mouth of the river, while Dr. Richardson started on a visit of exploration to the north-eastern extremity of Great Bear Lake. Their winter-quarters were to be Fort Franklin, at the south-western extremity of that inland sea.

Captain Franklin, accompanied by Mr. Kendall, accordingly embarked on the 8th in the largest of the boats, and, gliding rapidly down the river, arrived on the 10th at Fort Good Hope, the most northern of the trading establishments. On the 16th of August the Arctic

Ocean was attained, and Captain Franklin writes, "the sea appeared in all its majesty, entirely free of ice, and without any visible obstruction to its navigation. Many seals and black and white whales were sporting on its waves; and the whole scene was calculated to excite in our minds the most flattering expectations as to our own success, and that of our friends in the Hecla and Fury."

The season of 1825 had indeed been unusually fine. Their arrival at the Arctic Sea occurred just at the time when it is most propitious for navigation; and it requires no great stock of credulity or romance to imagine that a party whose leader was unshackled by responsibilities, and *red-tape* "instructions" from the Colonial Office, might at once have made a bold and a successful push for the Russian settlement at Kotzebues Sound.

Such was not Captain Franklin's party. They returned in safety to Fort Franklin on the 5th of September, and found that Dr. Richardson had recently arrived from his exploration of Bear Lake, which he had surveyed to the influx of Dease's River, near its north-eastern extremity.

The party thus reassembled at Fort Franklin consisted of forty persons. The four officers already named, Mr. Peter Warren Dease, an officer

of the Hudson's Bay Company, attached to the expedition; nineteen British seamen, marines, and voyagers, nine Canadians, two Esquimaux, a half-breed, and four Chipewyan hunters. There were, besides, three women, six children, and one Indian lad; and also a few infirm Indians who required temporary support.

The winter was passed by this large party without much, if any, unusual privation. A good supply of meat had been provided in advance. Fish, except during a short period in the dead of winter, were procured in sufficient abundance at the different fisheries established on the Lake. The hunters supplied them occasionally with fresh venison; and towards spring they received ample supplies of dried meat. Thus the Pemican and other stores, intended for their summer voyage, were kept entire.

This voyage was commenced on the 21st of June, 1826; on the 25th the party reached Fort Norman. On the 1st of July it arrived at Fort Good Hope; and on the 3rd having attained Point Separation, where the Mackenzie River branches into different channels, the parties intended for the western and eastern journeys, diverged from each other.

Captain Franklin, Lieutenant Back, eleven Europeans, two Canadians, and Augustus, an

Esquimaux interpreter, embarked in the boats named the Lion and Reliance, on the western survey.

Dr. Richardson, Mr. Kendall, nine Europeans, and Ooligbuck, another Esquimaux from Churchhill, started on the survey between the Mackenzie and Coppermine Rivers, in the boats named the Dolphin and Union.

The largest of these boats,* the Lion, was twenty-six feet long, and five feet four inches broad; was adapted for six rowers, a steersman, and an officer; it could be borne on the shoulders of six men, and was found, on trial, to be capable of carrying three tons' weight in addition to the crew. The others were a trifle smaller.

I shall first advert to the proceedings of Captain Franklin's party.

They reached the coast on the 7th, having been for awhile perplexed amidst the channels which form the delta of the Mackenzie. They here fell in with a large body of Esquimaux, who at first appeared friendly; but their cupidity being excited by a view of the treasures which the boats contained, they concerted a plan for the pillage and murder of the whole party. Unlike Indians, who will never, with whatever odds

* Three of the four were manufactured expressly for the expedition, in England.

in their favour, make a bold and open attack, the Esquimaux showed very unequivocal symptoms of their intentions; but the excellent Franklin would not credit those indications; and under this misapprehension allowed them such facilities for attack, that it is very wonderful how the party escaped. No one can read Franklin's narrative without being struck with admiration of his humanity in abstaining, under very irritating and alarming circumstances, from the use of fire-arms.

The sea, which at the mouth of the Mackenzie was open and unincumbered, was found obstructed with ice as they proceeded westward. This caused much delay, and the plan adopted on the subsequent expedition, (my brother's,) of *doubling* the packs of ice which lay close in shore, was not hazarded. The weather in the latter end of July, and beginning of August, was singular for heavy gales. These, though they delayed the progress of the party, had the effect of breaking up the ice, and would have made the latter part of August, and the month of September, very propitious for Arctic navigation.

The slowness and uncertainty of the westward progress may be traced on Franklin's Chart, thus:

July 9th. Line of unbroken ice.

July 10—16th. Followed up the ice as it broke from the *land*.

16—30th. Heavy ice unbroken to leeward, and closely packed in shore.

July 30—August 3. Unbroken ice.

August 3—4th. Ice newly broken from the shore and close (a whale seen).

4—6th. Ice just broken from the shore, but closely packed.

6—16th. Drift ice.

They frequently saw Esquimaux, who appear to be numerous on the coast, but held as little intercouse with them as possible.

On the 16th of August, having attained Return Reef, lon. 149° 37′, west, it was determined to discontinue the further prosecution of the voyage, although the sea was now clear of the icy obstructions which had so long detained them. The 20th of August was pointed out by "the instructions" as the latest date to which the progress westward of the expedition was to be continued. Lord Bathurst did, indeed, give permission to the party to remain for the winter with the Esquimaux; but that was an alternative neither very practicable nor very pleasant.

This determination was very unfortunate; for, on the 22nd, the barge of the Blossom (sent to co-operate through Behring's Straits) reached

Point Barrow, one hundred and sixty miles west of their position; and there is no reason to doubt that the intermediate distance could have been with great facility accomplished. My brother's party was indeed obstructed by ice in passing this space, but that was at an earlier period of the season, he having reached Return Reef on the 23rd of July.

The return to Mackenzie River was more expeditious than the advance; another proof of the greater facility of navigating the Arctic Sea in August than in July. Leaving Return Reef on the 18th of August, they reached the mouth of the Mackenzie on the 30th; arrived at Fort Good Hope on the 7th of September, and were snugly established in their winter-quarters at Fort Franklin on the 21st.

I shall next advert to Dr. Richardson's expedition from the Mackenzie to the Coppermine River, which was completely successful. They descended the eastern branch of the Mackenzie, which falls into the ocean ninety miles to the east of the channel followed by Franklin, and had likewise an encounter, on first reaching the coast, with the Esquimaux, who attempted to pillage; but they, also, happily extricated themselves without appealing to the *ultima ratio* of fire-arms.

The progress eastward was rapid and but little obstructed by ice. The first part of the voyage was along a low range of coast which shelters from the ocean a large and unexplored sheet of brackish water, Esquimaux Lake,* which is said to receive several rivers. This low range passed, the coast becomes bold, with deep water. It has many bays and inlets; and whales of large size were seen disporting themselves close to the shore,—a sure sign that there is, either here or at no great distance, a long if not continual season of open water.

On the 18th of July, the northern promontory of Cape Bathurst was passed: on the 23rd, Cape Parry, equally prominent, though not so northerly, was doubled. The coast from thence had "heavy masses of drift ice," but they were safely and expeditiously passed through. On the 4th of August, an extensive land to the northward was discovered, and named "Wollaston Land:" but the Straits of the Dolphin and Union afforded a passage to the south of that island (yet unvisited by civilized man); and on the 7th, the party passed Cape Krusenstern, the western point of George the Fourth's Coronation Gulf,—thus

* The Esquimaux gave it an extent from north to south of more than one hundred and forty miles, and from east to west of one hundred and fifty miles.

connecting the discoveries of the voyage with those made by Captain Franklin in the former expedition. On the 8th, they entered the Coppermine River.

The ascent of it being considered impracticable, the boats were left at the Bloody Fall, and the party struck across the barren grounds for Bear Lake.

They reached the site of the future Fort Confidence on the 18th—were delayed six days for the boat which was ordered to be sent from Fort Franklin to meet them at that point. It arrived on the 24th; and on the 1st of September, they reached Fort Franklin, after an absence of only seventy-one days.

Captain Franklin and Dr. Richardson returned to England, *viâ* Canada, in the summer of 1827; the remainder of the Expedition (except those attached to the Hudson's Bay Company's service) reached England later in the season by the route of Hudson's Bay. The officers were special objects of royal and public favour. Captain Franklin received a knighthood — Dr. Richardson a permanent appointment; while Lieutenants Back and Kendall were, by special minute of the Admiralty, at once made Post Captains.

CAPTAIN SIR JOHN ROSS'S EXPEDITION.

It does not fall within my province to advert to the different maritime expeditions, by which our knowledge of the Arctic Seas and Islands bordering on Northern America has been acquired.

This would form too wide a theme for me to enter upon, and would in no manner illustrate my subject; for it must be remarked that nothing whatever has been done for the survey of the Arctic coast of America, by any of the different maritime expeditions. Beechey's Point Barrow, to the westward, I consider as the north-eastern extremity of Behring's Straits; while it is still doubtful whether Parry's "Straits of the Fury and Hecla," have a part of America for their southern shore. The distance between these two points is 70 degrees of longitude—eight of these —Boothia Gulf—have not yet been explored. The other sixty-two have been traced through the Expeditions which I have already adverted to, and which shall be narrated hereafter.

But the expedition of Captain Sir John Ross having, as he asserted, made explorations by land which fully demonstrated the non-existence of any passage leading from the southern extremity of Prince Regent's Inlet (or, as he names it, Gulf

of Boothia) to the Arctic Sea; an assertion which was somewhat shaken by Back's descent of the Great Fish River, and which has been demonstrated by the expedition, which will be fully narrated in the following pages, to be quite incorrect,—I must briefly advert to his proceedings.

Having advanced, during the season of open water of 1829, down Prince Regent's Inlet in his steam-ship the Victory,* as far as lat. 69° 59′, Captain Ross was compelled to take refuge for the winter in a bay, which he named—after the munificent supporter of the expedition—Felix Harbour.

He was soon joined by parties of Esquimaux, with whom he entered into a friendly and cordial communication, which continued uninterrupted during his stay on this desolate coast. From them he received much information respecting the configuration of the southern portion of Prince Regent's Inlet, which they asserted—as their countrymen at Igloolck did to Parry—approached nearly to Repulse Bay.

A chart is given by Captain Ross as drawn by the most intelligent of those natives. It delineates the Gulf of Boothia as a *cul de sac*, having no connexion, save at the Straits of Fury

* Fitted out by the liberality of Mr. Sheriff Booth, afterwards created a Baronet.

and Hecla, with the sea either to the east or west; and the journeys made by the officers of the ship so convinced him of the correctness of the chart, that he denies the possibility of there being any passage to the southward of his position. He has proved as wrong in asserting this, as he was in asserting, on a former occasion, that Barrow's Strait was a Bay. Fortunately, however, for his pocket,* if not reputation, he convinced a Parliamentary Committee of the truth of his assertion.

An Esquimaux boy "described a place where they were obliged to cross in their canoes a stream of salt water that was always flowing to the eastward,† and which could not be passed in any other manner." By this he undoubtedly meant the Strait of Boothia, happily discovered by the expedition on which my brother acted; and it is singular that this Strait—though not above one hundred and fifty miles distant from the harbours in which the Victory lay for three winters, and not above sixty miles distant from points traversed by Commander

* He obtained, in consequence of this Report, a knighthood and a grant of 5000*l.*, besides pay for his crew and promotion for his officers.

† There is a regular tide, ebbing and flowing very strongly through the Strait of Boothia; Captain Ross denying the existence of this strait, was not likely to cross-question his informant.

Ross — was not only not explored, but its existence unknown.

The journeys performed in the spring of 1830, conducted principally by Commander Ross, showed the existence of an isthmus of extremely narrow breadth and intersected by lakes, which was presumed to join the great peninsula of Boothia to the American continent. This he crossed, and saw the Great Northern Ocean to the westward. Commander Ross proceeded still further, and travelled along the southern shore of this deep inlet for nearly one hundred and fifty miles, deeming that he was tracing the Arctic coast of the American Continent; *a further progress of twenty miles would have convinced him of his error* by leading him to Cape Jane Franklin, the western extremity of the Island of Boothia.

Being imprisoned for another winter at a point very little distant from Felix Harbour, similar journeys completed the survey of the northern shore of this inlet, and led to the discovery of the North Magnetic Pole.

Returning, after much detention and much suffering, to England, Captain Ross claimed, and for awhile received, the merit of having, by his explorations, fully proved that no passage exists between the Gulf of Boothia and the Western Arctic Ocean, south of Barrow's Strait!

CAPTAIN BACK'S EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF CAPTAIN ROSS.

CAPTAIN Ross's protracted absence began, in the winter of 1831-32, to cause some uneasiness among his friends; but as it was known that he would find abundant provisions and stores left by Parry at the Fury Beach, it was presumed that he had replenished his stock there, and a hope was entertained that he had succeeded in his object, and that he might next be heard of through the Pacific.

But no intelligence respecting him reaching England in 1832, a feeling of intense anxiety for his safety arose in the public mind; and, as it was thought that he must be shut up in the ice, attention was directed to the possibility of affording him assistance—or at least ascertaining his fate, by means of an expedition sent through the northern part of America to Prince Regent's Inlet, where it was presumed he was shut up.

The British Government, though it declined to send out such an expedition itself, offered to contribute the sum of two thousand pounds in aid of the funds for this laudable purpose, which might be raised by public subscription. A sufficient sum was thus raised in the winter of 1832,

and the command of the expedition having been refused by Dr. Richardson, in consequence of other engagements, it was tendered to and accepted by Captain Back.

Native report—which is seldom far wrong—had led the Government officers employed on previous expeditions to a belief in the existence of a river having its sources in the country north-east of the Great Slave Lake, and flowing by an easterly course to the Arctic Sea. This river, it was supposed by them—and their supposition turned out to be very nearly correct—would lead to a point on the coast nearly due south of, and not distant more than three hundred miles from, the beach on which the Fury's stores had been left—where it was presumed Captain Ross and his party would be found. A contrary opinion was entertained by the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company; Sir George Simpson maintaining that the river rising to the north-east of Great Slave Lake was identical with Back's River falling into Bathurst's Inlet.

Captain Back, accompanied by Mr. Richard King, the surgeon attached to the expedition, and three English sailors, left England in February, and reached Montreal on the 9th of April, 1833.

Receiving here an addition to his party of four

privates of the Royal Artillery,—a large number of whom eagerly volunteered for the expedition, —he proceeded in canoes furnished by the Hudson's Bay Company through the usual channel of communication to Lake Winipeg, where, from among the servants of the Company, he engaged the additional men required for the expedition.

Starting thence in a light canoe, he reached Fort Resolution early in August. Here he obtained some further information from the Indians respecting the rivers flowing northward. They all described the Fish River* as infinitely preferable to the Great Fish River.* The former they said was a fine river, which flows through a country where musk-ox, moose and rein deer, and fish abound. The latter they justly described as a rapid and shallow stream, running through a barren country. They at the same time asserted that their mouths were so contiguous, that a fire at one could be seen from the other.

Back, with wise discrimination, judged that it was impossible that a stream such as the natives described the Fish River, could flow into the Arctic Ocean, (it will be seen that it flows into

* I prefer using these English names to the uncouth Indian ones (The-lew and Thlew-ee-cho-dezeth), of which they are the translations.

Chesterfield Inlet,) and determined on immediately visiting the sources of the Great Fish River.

Passing to the north-eastern extremity of Great Slave Lake, and ascending Hoar Frost River to its source, he made a portage to Artillery Lake, and thence proceeded through the lakes to which he has given the names of Clinton —Colden, and Aylmer. His native guide was much at fault as to the position of the source which they were in search of; and at length it was accidentally hit upon, on the 29th of August, by Back himself, in a little lake which he named Sussex Lake, situated not more than a mile from Lake Aylmer.

He assured himself that it was really a river flowing northward, by following its course to Musk Ox Lake, and then immediately retraced his steps to the eastern extremity of Slave Lake, where a party under Mr. Alexander Roderick Macleod—an officer of the Hudson's Bay Comny, appointed to assist the expedition, had been directed to form an establishment. The whole party was thus collected together at their winter-quarters, on which was bestowed the name of Fort Reliance.

The winter was passed without much privation. Provisions, indeed, were scarce; and the party had

to be much dispersed to procure the means of subsistence at different fisheries. Starving Indians around them increased the dreariness ever attendant on a residence in this northern wilderness; at times they lived from hand to mouth, and were obliged to break upon the stock of *pemican* prepared for their summer voyage.

On the 25th of April, 1834, they received unexpected news of the safe return to England of Captain Ross. The main purpose of the expedition was thus obviated; but it was considered that it might do much for the enlargement of the knowledge of the geography of the Arctic coast of America. That aim Captain Back was instructed still to pursue, and even to devote two summers to a connecting survey between the points reached by Franklin and Ross.

Two boats were built in the spring on Artillery Lake, one for the descent to the sea, the other to be in readiness for the return of the party in the autumn.

On the 7th of June, 1834, Captain Back and the last of the party set out from Fort Reliance. They crossed the country to the Artillery Lake, where they arrived next day. Now commenced the most arduous part of the service—that of hauling the boats, baggage, and provisions over the ice of Artillery, Clinton—Colden, and

Aylmer Lakes. This was done by the united exertions of all the party, joined to those of some Indians; the indefatigable Mr. Macleod, with a party of Indians, hunting in advance of the party, and making deposits of fresh venison for them to pick up.

This transport service was not got through with till the 3rd of July. The party divided at the Musk Ox Lake; Mr. Macleod, with his hunters and some servants, being sent back to Great Slave Lake, while Captain Back, Mr. King, and eight men, commenced their descent to the coast. Mr. Macleod would, willingly, have engaged to strike across the barren grounds to the coast with his Indians later in the season, and thus secure a retreat for the party, should they succeed in advancing to the west; but his services were considered more valuable, in making the necessary arrangements for bringing supplies from the Company's post of Fort Resolution to Fort Reliance.

The tedious descent of the Great Fish River I shall not detail: the weather was stormy, the lakes through which the river passed still covered with ice; the falls and rapids numerous; but the consummate skill of Mackay and Sinclair, the men who subsequently accompanied my brother, enabled them safely to pass all these dangers.

On the 28th of July they fell in with a small party of Esquimaux, near the mouth of the river, who were quiet, inoffensive, and disposed to afford assistance and information.

On the 30th, the party encamped at Cape Beaufort, a prominent point of the inlet, into which the Great Fish River falls. From this promontory they had the unpleasant view of the ocean, still covered with ice to the westward, while to the eastward there was a comparatively clear sea. But their views were confined to the western survey; and though the promise to the east was inviting, it was not in accordance with "instructions" to pursue it.

From Cape Beaufort, a narrow lane of open water led them to Montreal Island: and on the 7th of August, a temporary disruption of the ice enabled them to reach Point Ogle, on the western shore of the inlet; this was the limit of their progress on the coast. They remained at and near this point for several days, in hopes of a clear sea. Several indications noticed during this delay, led Captain Back to the conclusions—which have been proved correct—that there was a passage to the westward not far distant from his encampment, and that the clear sea seen to the eastward, was a continuation of the Gulf of Boothia.

On the 16th of August, there being no appearance of a clearing away of the western ice, the return of the expedition was commenced. On the 21st it re-entered the Great Fish River; its ascent was long and tedious, but unmarked by any particular difficulties. On the 16th of September, Musk Ox Lake was again the encamping place; and here Mr. Macleod was found waiting their return with some men and Indians.

On the 27th of September the party was again assembled at Fort Reliance; and after full consideration of the prospects of completing the survey, Captain Back reluctantly came to the conclusion that it would be useless and injudicious to make another attempt the succeeding season, either by again descending the Great Fish River to its mouth, or by crossing the country from Lake Beechey to Bathurst's Inlet.

He returned to England by the way of Canada, in the summer of 1835; Dr. King and the Europeans of the party by Hudson's Bay, in the autumn of the same year.

The result of this expedition was important only from its throwing doubts upon the assertion of Captain Ross, that Boothia was a peninsula of Northern America. A sea was found where, according to his theory, a sea should not be.

It is evident that nothing could or would have been done by this expedition for the relief and assistance of Captain Ross and his followers, had they been imprisoned by the want of a ship and boats on the shores of Prince Regent's Inlet. Yet it was highly creditable to the British nation that an expedition with so humane an object was so promptly organized.

SIR GEORGE BACK'S INTENDED SURVEY FROM WAGER RIVER.

In 1836 an expedition, of which the object was the exploration of the yet undiscovered part of the American Arctic coast, was sent out by the British Government under the command of Captain Back. The Terror, bomb-ship, was fitted out for this service, and Captain Back's instructions were:

To proceed through Hudson's Straits to Wager River, or Repulse Bay; thence, by carrying light boats across the narrow strip of land dividing those inlets from the Gulf of Boothia, one party was to trace the eastern coast of that gulf, and another to follow the American coast till it reached Franklin's Point Turnagain, or Ross's Extreme.

These instructions were "framed with the in-

tention, and in the full belief, that this service may be duly and faithfully performed in the course of the present season (1836), and that this Arctic expedition may be distinguished from all others by the promptitude of its execution, and by escaping from the gloomy and unprofitable waste of eight months' detention."

This "full belief" on the part of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty was, to say the least, very absurd. The ice in Hudson's Straits and Bay seldom, if ever, permits of the arrival of a vessel from England on the shores of that inland sea previous to the month of August; what then remains of the season for Arctic navigation is evidently too short to permit of the surveys pointed out being executed under the most favourable circumstances, or by the most energetic officers.

Geographical Societies and Lords of the Admiralty, "living at home at ease," may prepare very plausible plans for Arctic expeditions, but the ice of the northern seas is very capricious, and is apt to mar the best considered projects—and this was not one of these. This particular season it was more capricious than it was ever before known to be. It blocked up passages which, in ordinary years, were quite free; and instead of "escaping," as my lords fully believed

they would, "from the gloomy and unprofitable waste of eight months' detention," Captain Back and his gallant crew were obliged to winter among the ice of Hudson's Bay, without being able to attain their desired harbour; and thus were, of course, utterly precluded from attempting the discoveries for which they were outfitted.

After encountering most imminent dangers, they succeeded, late in the summer of 1837, in extracting their vessel from the ice, and had much difficulty in keeping her afloat during the homeward voyage.

The extent of discovery on the northern coast of America, previous to 1837, may be concisely recapitulated thus:—

Point Barrow, the north-east cape of Behring's Straits, reached by the Blossom's barge from the Pacific, is in longitude 156° 20′ W.

From the Atlantic, an advance had been made through Prince Regent's Inlet to longitude 92° W.

The distance between these two points is (in round numbers) one thousand six hundred statute miles.

The existence of two rivers falling into the Arctic Sea between those points, and flowing

northward from countries comparatively known, was proved by Hearne and Mackenzie.

Following those rivers, two successive Government expeditions traced the coast between their mouths; and also an extent of coast westward from Mackenzie's River, of three hundred and forty miles; and eastward from Coppermine River, of one hundred and eighty miles.

The expedition of Captain Back proved that a river fell into the Arctic Ocean at a point nearly due south of Captain Ross's *Peninsula* of Boothia.

Thus, then, it remained for the expedition to which my brother was appointed,

First. To fill up the blank between the extreme west of Franklin's discoveries and Point Barrow, a distance of one hundred and seventy miles. But in order to attain this *terra incognita*, it was necessary to pass along a line of coast of three hundred and forty miles—the hard-won progress of Franklin during the summer of 1826.

Second. To trace the Arctic coast between Franklin's Eastern Extreme, and the gulf (Prince Regent's Inlet) to which entrances had been proved to exist from Baffin's Bay by Barrow's Straits, and from Hudson's Bay by the Straits of the Fury and Hecla—a distance of four hundred miles. To attain this wide field of explo-

ration, it was necessary to pass along a line of coast of one hundred and eighty miles, the discovery of which was effected by Franklin's first and disastrous expedition.

These objects were fully accomplished through the exertions and energies of my brother—exertions often impeded—energies repressed by the unfortunate and ill-judged addition to the expedition, which he himself planned, of a senior officer.

MR. RICHARD KING'S PROJECTED EXPEDITION.

Mr. Richard King, who accompanied Captain Back in the capacity of surgeon, and whose published narrative leaves no doubt that he disapproved of his commander's proceedings, was very active in calling public attention to Arctic discovery during the winter of 1835-6. Several public meetings, with the view of effecting, through public subscriptions, an enterprise which the Government seemed to have given over in despair, were held in London, under respectable auspices: and Mr. King not only volunteered to conduct an expedition for this purpose, but had even made arrangements to start for America in the spring of 1836, which failed from some unexplained cause.

Mr. King's plan was to start from Montreal in the spring of 1836, in a bark canoe, manned by six men, hired for the expedition in Canada. To follow the usual route to Athabasca Lake, and thence to convey his canoe through a chain of small lakes and portages (never yet explored, though known from Indian report to exist) which led from thence to the Fish River. To descend that river for some distance to a point where a tributary joins from the west, the head waters of which he supposed to be near the head waters of Bailie's River, falling into the Great Fish River. At this place he was to winter, in a country abounding (according to Indian report) with Musk Ox, Moose and Rein Deer, Fish, &c.

In the succeeding spring the canoe was to be conveyed across to Great Fish River, and the mouth of that river being attained, the survey of the Arctic Coast was to be commenced. There is no doubt that such a chain of communication exists between Athabasca Lake and the Fish River; and it is now well known that the Fish River is a fine stream flowing into Chesterfield Inlet: but the country between the two rivers is quite unknown; and the possibility of transporting a canoe across it is very doubtful. Admitting that it had been transported in safety, and that the party had reached the mouth of the Great

Fish River, it is evident that a bark canoe is quite unfit for navigating the Arctic Ocean; and Mr. King's progress would, in all likelihood, have been little greater than that of his late commander. Moreover, without the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company, the attempt would, most likely, have been futile. Mackay, Sinclair, and all the men experienced in the navigation of the Arctic rivers are in its service; and no Canadian voyageurs could have been procured in Canada adequate for such an enterprise.

As a self-depending scheme—that is, one not dependent on the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company—it was, however, undoubtedly the most feasible that could have been projected.

CHAPTER X.

Organization of an Expedition for Arctic Discovery by the Hudson's Bay Company.—Their Reasons for this Step.—My Brother called upon to plan the Expedition.—Plans for Arctic Discovery which he drew up.—"Instructions" founded thereon.—Teaching in Astronomy.—Deficiency of Instruments, and Comments thereon.

THE projected expedition of Mr. King was not at all satisfactory to the managers of the Hudson's Bay Company.

He had made himself very obnoxious to them by severe strictures on their operations, and his return to their country in command of an expedition would have been exceedingly distasteful to them: this was one reason for their taking up the subject themselves.

Another more weighty reason was the necessity which they felt of doing something to place themselves in a position to make an application to the British Government for a gratuitous renewal* of

* That renewal was obtained in 1838–9 for twenty-one years from 1842, after much negotiation; during which the Government made pressing claims for an annual payment in

their grant of the exclusive trade of the region which was to form the field of the operations of the expedition.

The *Morning Chronicle*, the best informed of English papers on North American affairs, thus refers to the measures which the Hudson's Bay Company at length took for the completion of the survey of the Arctic coast of the continent. "As to the expense of the expedition, although it must have been considerable, yet, considering that the Company was established for the purpose, among others, of making discoveries in the territories granted to them, and in the adjoining country of America, the credit due to them *on that score* is only that of perform-

return for this renewal,—claims which were waived principally in consideration of the expedition undertaken for Arctic discovery. The first grant to the United Company (formed out of the rival North-West and Hudson's Bay) of exclusive trade with the Indians over all the extra-provincial parts of North America was gratuitous for twenty-one years from 1821; but it was the intention of the framers of the act, under which that grant was given, that an annual rent should be demanded on its renewal. The words of the act are "from and after the expiration of such first period of twenty-one years, it shall be lawful for his Majesty or successors to reserve such rents in any future grant or licences to be made to the same or any other parties, as shall be decided just and reasonable, with security for the payment thereof; and such rents shall be deemed part of the land revenues of his Majesty."

ing the duty under which their charter was originally granted."

Influenced by these views, the Directors, in the spring of 1836, instructed their local agent, Mr. George Simpson, to make arrangements for the equipment of an expedition under their own auspices. For the planning and conduct of such an enterprise, no one in their territories was so well qualified as my brother; and he was at once called upon by Governor Simpson to enter upon it, which he did, not only with zeal and alacrity, but with the highest delight.

The purpose of the expedition, as first stated to my brother, was to connect the discoveries of Captains Ross and Back; and with this view he drew up the following plan for its operations.

"Engage, at Norway House, ten good men;* eight of whom to accompany the expedition to the sea, and two to be employed with a party of Indians, during the summer of 1837, in collecting provisions at the point of rendezvous, for the retreat of the expedition, and for the fall fishing at Fort Reliance. With these ten men, and the requisite outfit (as per list), the expedition should start as soon as possible from Norway House, in two

* "Good men" is a term applied in the Indian country to able and willing boatmen.

canoes, and overtake the *Portage-la-loche* boats and get them to embark five bags of pemican each, (say twenty bags,) at Ile à la Crosse, to be brought on by the Mackenzie River craft to Fort Resolution, and thence by one of the canoes despatched this fall from Fort Reliance. The canoes to push on to establish Fort Reliance, and to procure the co-operation of a party of Indian hunters there, to be employed in collecting provisions during the fall and winter,—to aid in transporting the boat, one canoe, and stores, to the head of Great Fish River in the spring,—to accompany the expedition down that river to Lake Beechey,—there to make a deposit of provisions—and, if they can be so induced, to cross over and meet the expedition on their return at the mouth of Back's River.

"If, for fear of the Esquimaux, the Indians could not be prevailed on to meet the expedition at the coast, they must remain at Lake Beechey, at a point to be fixed upon, till the return of the expedition from the sea, and accompany it back to Fort Reliance.

"This part of the journey to be effected by means of the canoe already noticed, which would be left at Lake Beechey on the descent. These arrangements having been made with the Indians, the party to proceed in their boat with the

utmost despatch down Great Fish River to Back's farthest point, where the survey must be renewed. If the expedition find Ross's Strait as supposed, and can reach Back's River by boat the same season, they must proceed on foot, provided with hides to make temporary canoes if necessary, to the appointed rendezvous at Lake Beechey. If they find a peninsula where Ross's Strait is supposed to exist, they must either, after examining this peninsula, return as they went; or, being provided with an Esquimaux interpreter, (forwarded from Churchill by the winter express,) if they fall in with that tribe, prosecute their journey during the winter on foot to Back's River, where the same party of Indians who have wintered at Fort Reliance should be appointed to meet them with the requisite provisions for their return early in the spring of 1838.

"By the proposed project, it is hoped that that portion of the coast which is most attainable from the interior, and whose delineation is most interesting to science, may be traced in the shortest period, and at the least expense."

The scope of the operations of the expedition being subsequently extended, in addition to the eastern survey, to the exploration of the *hiatus* between the Mackenzie River and Point Barrow, my brother drew up for it the following bold but

well considered plan. The ultimate complete success of the expedition is a triumphant proof of the foresight with which its plans were formed.

PROPOSED PLAN OF ARCTIC EXPEDITION, 1836.

"Engage at Norway House twelve good men; start from thence with the Athabasca brigade, with one additional boat manned by eight of the above hands, and the remaining four distributed among the four Athabasca boats. Take on the requisite outfit from Norway House, any deficiences in which to be indented for and brought up from York Factory this season, and forwarded next spring by the *Portage-la-loche* brigade. Embark this season, either at Cumberland or Ile à la Crosse, thirty bags of pemican, and proceed to winter in the Athabasca district. There make the necessary arrangements with the Dogrib and Copper Indians, to secure their co-operation with an establishment to be formed next summer at Dease's River, Great Bear Lake.

"At the opening of the navigation in 1837, proceed to Great Bear Lake River, in two boats, or one boat and a canoe, manned by the twelve people belonging to the expedition, and two half-breeds or Indians.

"From thence despatch the smaller boat or the canoe, with four of the men and the two half-

breeds or Indians to Dease's River, to erect the establishment and make the fishery. The officers and the remaining eight men to proceed to the coast, and complete the survey westward, from Point Beechey to Point Barrow; thence return to winter quarters at Dease's River. The additional outfit to be forwarded, as already noticed, by the portage brigade in the summer of 1837—having been brought to Fort Norman, or to the entrance of Great Bear Lake River, it would be conveyed from thence to winter quarters by the expedition on its return from the sea; likewise any provisions that could be procured from Athabasca or Mackenzie River.

"As early as practicable in the spring of 1838, transport the boat intended for the eastern survey (which should be built at Dease's River during the winter) and the necessary stores across to the Coppermine River, and there embark with eight men as before, leaving the remaining four and the Indians to make provision for the ensuing winter.

"The expedition then to proceed direct to Point Turnagain, and continue the survey from thence to the eastward, so as to connect the discoveries of Captains Ross and Back, if practicable; this effected, or when it becomes unsafe to remain longer on the coast, the party to return to the Copper-

mine, and make the best of their way back to Dease's River; to winter there, or at Fort Simpson, if the season will permit; and the whole expedition to come out to Norway House in the fall of 1839. "THOMAS SIMPSON."

The following "instructions," on which the expedition proceeded, (deviating occasionally, however, from them,) were founded entirely on this plan—indeed, are a mere translation of it into official phraseology; "the rest is all but leather and prunella:" yet, after the scheme was matured, it was strangely, unwisely, and unjustly determined that the nominal chief command should not be vested in my brother. It was bestowed on Mr. Peter Warren Dease, an elderly officer of the Company, who had accompanied Captain Franklin on his last expedition.

The cause alleged to my brother and his relatives for this unfair change was the jealousy which would be felt by the older officers of the Company, were his appointment that of ostensible commander—a jealousy which it was asserted (I am loath to admit with justice) would be sufficient to induce them to throw every impediment and obstruction in the way of the expedition. This was the avowed reason; but the correct one, undoubtedly, was the unwillingness

of Governor Simpson, springing from personal as well as political grounds, to permit his young relative to attain a position so prominent and independent as that in which the completion, alone and uncontrolled, of the survey of the Arctic coast of America would have placed him. My brother's enthusiasm, when once he had entered upon the subject, was too great to permit his being kept back, even by this unlooked for change, although he deeply felt and bitterly regretted it. This enthusiasm, it will be abundantly evident, was the sole secret of the complete success of the expedition; it will be no less evident, from notices in the sequel, that the signer of the "instructions," was quite unacquainted with the nature of the service to be performed, or of the means and measures necessary for its performance; yet to him the honour of projecting the expedition has been largely ascribed; and to him were awarded the honours consequent on its successful completion.

INSTRUCTIONS.

"Messrs. P. W. Dease and Thomas Simpson.

"Norway House,

"GENTLEMEN, July 2nd, 1836.

"BY the 79th and 80th resolutions of Council of this season, copies of which are annexed,

you will observe that we have determined on fitting out an expedition forthwith, for the purpose of endeavouring to complete the discovery and survey of the northern shores of this continent.

"2. This object has for a great length of time excited the most lively interest in the public mind; and has baffled the exertions of many enterprising men, among whom the names of Parry, Franklin, Ross, and Back have of late years appeared conspicuous; but I trust that the honour of its accomplishment is reserved for the Hudson's Bay Company, through your exertions; and in selecting you for so important a mission, we give the best proof of the high opinion we entertain of your abilities and qualifications for such an undertaking.

"3. The expedition, consisting of twelve men, is now placed under your direction; and you will be pleased to conduct it without delay to the Athabasca country; and to pass the ensuing winter at Fort Chipewyan or Great Slave Lake, as you may consider expedient: although in my opinion, Great Slave Lake would be the preferable wintering ground, as regards the object of the expedition.

"4. At the opening of the navigation in June, you will proceed by boat down the Mackenzie River to Fort Norman, and there leave four men,

with directions that they proceed from thence to the north-east end of Great Bear Lake, and there erect buildings, establish fisheries, and collect provisions for the accommodation and maintenance of the party during the winter of 1837-38.

"5. You will then go down to the sea with the remaining eight men, and endeavour to trace the coast to the westward to long. 156° 21′, lat. 71° 23′ 39″ north, whence Captain Beechey's barge returned. Should your progress along the coast be obstructed by ice or fog, as Sir John Franklin's was, you will either put the boat in a place of security, and proceed on foot with all your party, or leave four men with the boat for its protection, while you go along the shore, carrying a sufficient quantity of provisions with you for the journey. It is desirable to take observations as frequently, and to survey the coast as accurately as possible, without, however, losing time in your outward journey in waiting for the appearance of the sun, moon, or stars, which are frequently obscured by the dense fogs that prevail so much on that coast; but devoting as much time to these objects as the season and the state of your provisions will allow on your return.

"6. At the most westerly point you may reach, you will erect on a conspicuous situation a pillar or mound, and leave deposited in the earth at its

base a bottle hermetically sealed, containing an outline of the leading circumstances connected with the voyage.

"7. In suggesting that the boat should be left in the event of your progress being obstructed by ice or fog, I beg it to be understood that that ought not to be done if there be the least probability that by perseverance you may succeed in getting her along shore, as the preservation of the boat I consider to be highly essential both to the accomplishment of the voyage, and to the protection of the party; but if there is no possibility of getting on with the boat, I beg to recommend that you provide yourselves with axes and cordage to make rafts for crossing rivers, and some parchment, sheeting, and oilcloths to make a couple of small canoes for the conveyance of the party, should it be found impossible to cross the rivers on rafts, and in order to secure your retreat in the event of the loss of the boat.

"8. Should you not be able to accomplish the voyage or journey during the season of open water, and that you fall in with friendly Esquimaux or Indians, as many of the party as can be maintained may remain with them, so as to complete the survey in the course of the winter or spring. In this, however, you will exercise your own discretion and be guided by circumstances.

"9. It is exceedingly desirable, however, that you should return by open water, so as to pass the winter at the establishment to be formed at the north-east end of Great Bear Lake, in order to make the necessary preparations for another voyage of discovery to the eastward at the opening of the navigation in the summer of 1838.

"10. The object of that voyage is to trace the coast from Franklin's Point Turnagain eastward to the entrance of Back's Great Fish River. To that end you will haul your boat across from the north-eastern extremity of Great Bear Lake to the Coppermine River, before the winter breaks up; and at the opening of the navigation proceed to the sea, and make as accurate a survey of the coast as possible, touching at Point Turnagain, and proceeding to Back's Great Fish River, if the strait or passage exist which that officer represents as separating the mainland from Ross's Boothia Felix; but, should it turn out on examination that no such strait exists, and that Captain Ross is correct in his statement that it is a peninsula, not an island,—you will in that case leave your boat and cross the isthmus on foot, taking with you materials for building two small canoes, by which you may follow the coast to Point Richardson, Point Machonochie, or some other given spot, that can be ascertained as

having been reached by Captain Back, and you will be regulated in determining whether you will return by Great Fish River or by the coast, by the period of the season at which you may arrive there, the state of the navigation, and other circumstances.

"11. In order to guard against any privation in the event of your returning by Great Fish River, it will be advisable to make arrangements at Great Slave Lake, that a supply of provisions, with ammunition and fishing-tackle, likewise babiche for snow-shoe lacing, be deposited at Lake Beechey or some other point on that route.

"12. Should you be unable to complete the voyage to the eastward from Coppermine River in one season, you may, as suggested in reference to the other voyage, take up your quarters with the Esquimaux for the winter, so as to accomplish it the following season.

"13. In making your arrangements for both voyages, I have to recommend that a considerable quantity of pemican and flour, not less than one hundred pieces, be provided for voyaging provisions; and that you be well supplied with materials for constructing small canoes, leather for shoes, and snow-shoe netting, likewise with ammunition, axes, crooked knives, fishing-hooks, net-thread, backing and setting

lines, and with warm clothing for yourselves and the people.

"14. The necessary astronomical and surveying instruments are provided to enable you to take observations, and to make surveys, in which you will be as accurate as possible; and you will be pleased to prepare a full and particular Journal, or narrative of the voyage; likewise a chart of the coast; and to take formal possession of the country, on behalf of Great Britain, in your own names, acting for the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, at every part of the coast you may touch, giving names to the different headlands, mountains, rivers, and other remarkable objects you may discover. It is also desirable that you make a collection of minerals, plants, or any specimens of natural history you may fall in with, that appear to be new, curious, or interesting.

"15. You are hereby authorised to avail yourselves, for the use of the expedition, of any assistance whatsoever you may require, at any of the Honourable Company's establishments you may touch at, or have communication with, either by letter or otherwise; and the gentlemen in charge of these establishments are hereby instructed to meet all demands you may make upon them.

"16. In the event of any accident occurring

to prevent either of you from proceeding on this mission, the other will be pleased to follow up the object of it, and to avail himself of the assistance, as second in command, of any clerk of the Company he may find within his reach; and such clerk will be pleased to act in that capacity accordingly.

"With fervent prayers for your safety and success,

"I remain, Gentlemen,
"Your most obedient servant,
"GEORGE SIMPSON."

The expedition was organized on the foregoing plan, and under the foregoing "instructions," at Norway House, in July, 1836. The complement of men was completed at the same rate of wages as on Captain Back's expedition (forty pounds per annum). It was unfortunate only in fishermen. One injured his leg, and was unable to go; another, a powerful man named Anderson, who had served at Fort Reliance with Captain Back, being seized with a sudden panic, fled into the woods, where he was found after its departure disordered in his mind. His place was filled up by a man subsequently engaged on the route northward.

A supply of trading-goods required to pay

the Indians for their services, and for provisions, having been got up from York Factory, and all the other arrangements being complete, Mr. Dease took his departure on the 21st of July for Athabasca, in company with Mr. Edward Smith, the officer in charge of that department, who afforded every possible aid in transporting the goods and provisions destined for the expedition during the long and laborious voyage to Fort Chipewyan, which they safely reached on the 26th of September.

At the same time, my brother returned to Red River settlement for the purpose of refreshing his knowledge of mathematics, and receiving instruction in practical astronomy.

The knowledge of his instructor was but very limited; but he profited well by this short interval of study and practice, as the correctness of his observations and surveys fully testify.

This correctness was, undoubtedly, not owing to the excellence or the abundance of instruments with which he was furnished, but solely to his own unremitting attention and inflexible perseverance. His original outfit of instruments consisted of little, if anything, more than a sextant, compass, and thermometer (a borrowed one). "A valuable gold watch, kindly lent to the expedition by C. F. Edwards Smith," was

his sole chronometer: and it was not until the third summer that he had the use of a dipping needle.

On the want of this and other instruments he thus writes to Governor Simpson: "I am thus deprived of the means of making magnetical experiments of the most interesting nature; so much so that Captain James Ross styles them the 'very key-stone' of his discoveries. I must in candour add that the limited and defective supply of instruments, particularly the want of chronometers, is alike unworthy of the Company's wonted liberality, and of the extent and importance of our undertaking."—Again he writes the second winter, "The dipping-needle, &c., have not come to hand. I did not think that in so important, yet as to cost insignificant, item of the expedition account, you could wish to practise such rigid economy, even while in all things else we are keeping down our expenses by every possible fraction."

CHAPTER XI.

A Winter Journey of One Thousand Two Hundred and Seventy-seven Miles from Red River to Athabasca.—Northern Squatters.—A Frontier Fortalice.—Pemican.—An Octogenarian.—The Secret of Travelling in the Far North.

In the afternoon of the 1st of December, 1836, the day he had fixed upon for his long winter journey from Red River Colony to Athabasca, my brother bade adieu to his kind and much esteemed friend Mr. Alexander Christie, to the worthy clergymen, and the other individuals forming the little society of this Oasis in the desert, all of whom breathed the warmest wishes for his welfare and success.

The autumn had been long and beautiful, and the snow had not as yet cast its white mantle upon the earth; he was therefore obliged to set out with horses and carts, which conveyed their little baggage to the Manitobah Lake. His gay carriole and three sledges followed light, drawn by the dogs and attended by their drivers, chosen men, who completed the little party

bound for the distant north. In this manner they proceeded for three days through a prairie country, studded with a few copses of poplar and dwarf oak. In the shade of these they obtained sufficient snow for their horses and dogs in lieu of water, a luxury not to be found in these arid plains, which, having been swept by the running fires so frequent and terrible in the prairies, presented a blackened and dismal aspect.

In the afternoon of the third day they reached the borders of Manitobah Lake, and procured a night's lodging in the huts of some "freemen," of whom they found eleven families resident there. These people subsist chiefly by hunting and fishing; they possess a few horses and cattle, enjoy a rude squalid plenty; and, though separated from their fellow men, seemed to live quite happily.

The lake had but recently assumed its icy covering, which, as far as the eye could distinguish, rose in huge masses, as if forbidding all further progress. So formidable was its appearance, that the people endeavoured to dissuade my brother from prosecuting that route; but he resolved to persevere, and dismissing their wheeled vehicles, they soon had their baggage stowed upon the sledges. The carriole intended

for himself he appropriated to the carriage of his books, instruments, &c., and preferred performing the whole journey to Athabasca on foot. Two of the young freemen agreed to afford the assistance of their dogs to the Company's nearest post; and, at each establishment on the route he in like manner procured the aid of a couple of fresh men to accompany him to the next. Then began the flourishing of whips, the shouts of the drivers, and the howling of the refractory dogs—all blending together in one horrible outcry.

For some distance they found the ice almost impracticable, but on doubling a point the broken rugged masses gave place to a smooth and glassy level. To walk on such a surface with the mocassins, or soft leather shoes of the country, was almost impossible. They were, however, provided with crampets, which they strapped on in the same manner as the Kamschatdales wear their "posluki," or ice-shoes.

Thus secured from many an awkward fall, they advanced rapidly, finding it no easy matter to keep pace with the dogs, who, rejoicing in the ease with which they now dragged their burdens, scampered away at a great rate.

The 4th, 5th, and part of the 6th were passed in this fatiguing exercise; at noon on the last day, they arrived at the small trading-point

called Manitobah House, where they were delighted to cast off, for the remainder of the day, the galling iron shoes, real instruments of torture, which, long before they had done with them, forced them with groans to acknowledge that their feet were indeed made of clay. Whether he was made of weak flesh and blood, was in some measure put to the test by having a warm couch spread for him in the corner of a large room, round which, on wooden bedsteads, lay his host Richards, his wife, and half-a-dozen grown-up daughters!

Again, next morning, strapping on their uncomfortable running-shoes, they passed at noon through a narrow strait that gives the whole lake the name of "Manitobah," or Evil Spirit; by which the Saulteaux Indians believe it to have been formerly haunted. According to their account terrible sounds used to be heard here, and fearful sights seen; among others, huge snakes with horns; and it was not till after the establishment of a trading post by the Canadians (the bold *Coureurs du Bois* of French Canada,) who with their singing and noise scared the demons away, that the natives ventured to pass by the place of dread.

The three following days were spent in passing the extent of Winipegoos Lake. Leaving it on

the evening of the 11th, they encamped in a wood of pines, the first they had yet met with. Their evergreen branches form the favourite bed of the winter voyageur, a comfort they did not fail to enjoy. They were visited in the evening by several Saulteaux Indians, who resort to a neighbouring river. They brought a supply of fresh fish, for which they were liberally paid; and a share of the travellers' supper, and their *news*, made the poor fellows quite happy. Here they gladly hung upon the trees their painful iron shoes.

The travelling through the wooded country between the Winipegoos Lake and Swan River was heavy and fatiguing. The path was unbeaten and difficult to distinguish, save by the practised eye of an Indian or half-breed guide.

The weather was mild and overcast,—unfitted, therefore, for such severe exercise as the use of the snow-shoe imposes; and the lakes and streams which it was requisite to cross, had in many places but a very slender coat of ice. On one occasion, when engaged in a wide *traverse*, they came suddenly upon a space of weak ice only an inch thick, and partially covered with water. It was an awkward predicament, for advance they must: they therefore laid themselves upon the sledges, and their weight thus pressing on an extended

surface, their sagacious dogs carried them safely over the danger.

Late in the evening of the 16th, they reached Fort Pelly, after a hard day's march of thirty-seven miles. This is a compact, well-ordered little place, sheltered from the north by a range of woods with the Assiniboine River winding a short distance in front.

The 17th and 18th (Sunday) were made days of rest; and Monday's cold might also have formed an apology to lazy travellers for loitering. The thermometer stood at —44° (76 degrees of frost,) yet they took their departure early in the forenoon.

At night it was so intensely cold, that my brother literally *burned* his fingers with the sextant, while taking the usual observations.

> —"The parching air
> Burnt frore; and cold perform'd the effect of fire."
>
> MILTON.

He afterwards adopted the precaution of using very thin chamois-leather gloves, and took observations at still lower temperatures, without inconvenience.

This extreme cold, was but slightly modified, during the eleven days which their journey from Fort Pelly to Carlton occupied. Most part of this route was through an open plain country—

the extensive prairie-land stretching from the Saskatchewan to the Missouri River, of which the distinguishing features are barren hills and hollows, tossed together in a wave-like form, as if an ocean had been suddenly petrified while heaving its huge billows in a tumultuous swell.

The rough grass of this waste affords, at times, food to countless herds of buffalo; but they did not fall in with any: indeed, my brother was so bent on making a quick advance, that it may be doubted whether he would have been desirous of meeting those animals, notwithstanding his extreme love for the chase. He kept always in advance of his party, and enjoyed the hare and partridge shooting which the more sheltered parts of the track afforded. Nor was the produce of his sport by any means an unwelcome addition to the evening meal, for which a twelve hours' hard walk in a freezing atmosphere, gives an appetite which lacks no condiments, and laughs at dyspepsia.

On the forenoon of the 30th of December, they arrived at Carlton, a trading-post situated on the Saskatchewan River. They were greeted by Mr. Pruden, the officer in charge, with a frank and cordial welcome; and my brother agreed, at his pressing request, to pass the "New-year" holidays with him.

This is a frontier post, much frequented by the Indians of the prairies, and was in past times a very dangerous position. High stockades surround the buildings; at the corners are bastions commanding the several entrances, in which small field-pieces are mounted; and in a gallery surrounding the whole square, there is a continuous range of wall-pieces—all standing loaded and primed.—These form a tolerable security against attack from Indians—who will seldom, even when in overwhelming numbers—attack men whom they see prepared to resist; yet even the preceding summer, they had several times fired into the place.

Twelve servants and two officers form the garrison of this little fortalice. A few years before, it was by no means unusual to see one thousand families of Indians encamped around it; but since the ravages of the small-pox, which made fearful havoc among the prairie tribes in the year 1834, the numbers of Indians who frequent this establishment has been reduced to one-fourth; and the survivors are much altered and subdued in their bearing.

There were but very few Indians at this time at the place; and these few were "Crees," the most peaceable of the Prairie tribes. My brother was anxious to have had intercourse with those

tribes, yet almost unaltered by intercourse with white men; though disappointed in this wish, he heard abundance of anecdotes and tales regarding them, and descriptions of their habits and customs both in war and peace, which when related on the spot, had much of the effect of personal experience and observation. There, in the face of a neighbouring hillock, was the stone which used to be selected as a target, in order to show to observing Indians the effect of the field-pieces in the bastion. Here was the hollow where had lodged the ball of some bravo, who, mounting his fiery steed, took a deliberate aim at the sentinel in the gallery, trusting to his rapid flight to escape the well-merited return. Below was the plain on which hundreds of skin-covered wigwams were wont to be planted round the huge council lodge, wherein the affairs of the tribe were debated with as much earnestness and eloquence, and with infinitely more decorum than often marks the discussions of the assembly in St. Stephens. Beyond that was the ground on which the young gallants exhibited their "wondrous horsemanship," trying the mettle of their wild steeds in races which would not disgrace Newmarket; albeit the appearance of a Piegan Jockey, "all *painted* and plumed in his *naked* array," his bridle a piece of thong tied round his

courser's lower jaw, his saddle a strip of buffalo-skin, would occasion some amazement among his velvet-capped, top-booted brethren of the English turf.

Great fires running through the prairies had driven the buffalo to a distance, and at this the usual paradise of fat living,* the residents and visitors owed their holiday dainties to the lucky accident of a Cree hunter killing a female moose and her two fawns, within a short distance of the establishment.

On the 2nd day of the year, (New Year's Day, being a Sunday) a dance was given in the hall, at which Mr. Pruden's fine family, with all the other inmates, young and old, attended, decked in their gayest attire, and gave full scope to the passion for dancing inherent in all the half-caste natives of this country; some of my brother's travelling companions were reluctantly compelled to abstain from this their favourite diversion, in consequence of having frozen their heels in the cold journey across the bleak prairies.

As this is the most extensive manufactory of

* 'Tis not alone in Scotland that the complaint might be made, that "God sends the meat, but the devil the cooks;" at these prairie posts the universal mode of cookery is to cut the meat into junks, or slices, and to fry or stew these in tallow!

pemican, and as that *provand* is frequently mentioned in the subsequent pages, it may be proper to give a short account of the process of manufacture. It is perfectly cleanly. The meat, which has been cut into thin flakes, and dried in the sun by the hunters, is conveyed to the establishment. It is there pounded in a mortar, or by beating on an extended hide. The fat, is boiled in a cauldron, and skimmed of all impurities; an equal quantity of pounded meat is added to the fat, and the mixture is well stirred, and poured hot into skin-bags. It hardens in a few hours, and is fit either for immediate use, or to be kept for three or four years. There is a superior kind of pemican prepared from a mixture of equal weights of pounded meat (ti bits), marrow fat, and blue-berries: this forms a composition, resembling in appearance a rich plum-pudding, which is very palatable, particularly when recently made. As to the nourishing qualities of *pemican*, it is almost unnecessary to give an opinion. Carbon for exhalation, fatty matter for nourishment, nitrogenized matter for muscle, are contained in abundance; but it is an unpleasant diet when taken *per se*.

On the 4th of January 1837, my brother started from Carlton, having his party reinforced with fresh men and dogs. The route was now through

a wooded country, where more snow had fallen, and consequently the travelling was much better. Seven days of hard marching, marked by nothing out of the usual routine of such journeys, brought him on the evening of the 10th, to the post of Isle à la Crosse.

Here he was obliged to wait the arrival of an express soon expected from Athabasca, in case there should be any arrangements to make respecting the additional supply of goods and provisions required for the expedition.

His host was Mr. Roderick Mackenzie, a hale old Highlander, who has passed, by at least ten years, the period described by the Psalmist as the scope of man's existence. He has a neat and comfortable little "Fort;" the fishery in the lake close at hand yields a constant supply of fresh and wholesome food, summer and winter; the little farm is productive, and the few domestic cattle maintained, were in excellent condition. Altogether this northern octogenarian, though placed "far in a wild unknown to public view," is to be envied rather than pitied: his greatest grievance (who is without a grievance?) is—that his Chipewayan Indians,—who, being the most provident of all the northern tribes, assume the independent tone of *warm men*,—take a delight in teazing their testy trader by telling him that "he

is too old—it 's time for him to go and die in his own country."

As a corollary to the preceding narrative, I give the following extract from my brother's letters to myself:—

"I quitted my kind friends at Red River, on the evening of the 1st of December; and a walk of two days in summer-like weather, with capital rabbit shooting, brought me to Manitobah Lake. On its slippery young ice we launched our dog-sledges; and for eight days did we tramp along it and the Winipegoos, obliged constantly to use horrible iron machines called "crampets," which we strapped on to our unfortunate feet with leather thongs. We then followed a long and intricate portage of 32 miles, with scarcely a particle of snow, to Swan Lake—tearing work, as my gay curricle found to its cost. This occupied two days through a woody country; and I had time to make fine havoc among the pheasants and partridges, which were very numerous. Changing our course now from north-west to south-west, three days' march along the Swan River landed us at Fort Pelly on the Upper Assiniboine, where I halted three days with George Setter, the post-master in charge—a worthy quaint old fellow, whom I think you saw at Red River. During

our stay there, the weather became intensely cold, the thermometer on the morning of our departure standing at—44° of Fahr. The severity of the weather was greatly augmented, when we emerged into the wide and unsheltered plains of the Saskatchewan, by a stiff north-wester, which compelled us for two days to muffle up all save our eyes—each lash of which speedily resolved itself in an icicle, and we had every now and then to turn our backs to the blast, and thaw off these optical obstructions with our fingers. The prairies were all burnt, and in consequence we fell in with no buffalo; but we saw a few tracks of bulls and of moose, when we regained the woods, or rather open bluffs, which form the country along the Bow River. On the banks of this noble stream, one bright morning, we espied four splendid red-deer inhaling the free breeze; but the beautiful creatures took the alarm when we endeavoured to creep towards them through a woody hollow, and, darting down the eminence on which they stood with the speed of lightning, disappeared from our view. The whole journey from Fort Pelly to Carlton occupied ten days; one of which was labour lost, through a blunder of my guide, that made me resort to chart and compass to recover our proper course. The encampments were very bad throughout all this part

of our route; and we considered ourselves fortunate when, at the close of the day, we could find a tolerable poplar hummock, with enough of dry grass to lay our blankets on. My Christmas couch was spread on willow branches; but my new year was spent at Carlton, tripping it on the light fantastic toe with the celebrated Miss Maria Pruden. She is a long lacer, like poor Swanson's flame at Red River, but she stoops confoundedly: her air is awkward, and she wants expression; in other respects, she is a seemly lass enough. Pruden himself is a portly, hospitable John Bull, fond of good eating. I passed six days with him, and six more brought me to this place (Isle à la Crosse) on the 10th instant, where I was cordially welcomed, and have since been most kindly entertained by that crabbed but worthy old soul, Roderick Mackenzie. The total distance from Fort Garry is about nine hundred miles; I have travelled so far (and shall continue to do so) entirely on foot, having regularly surveyed the whole route, and am highly pleased with the extreme accuracy of my astronomical observations, which afforded me much amusement in many a tedious encampment, for, excepting from Carlton hither, we could scarcely ever start before daylight.

"This is a nice quiet place, and the Chipewyans,

in skill and perseverance as hunters, in foresight and in honesty, present a marked contrast to the worthless Crees and Saulteaux, among whom I have so long been. We had a merry dance here, and I have been quite the feasted pilgrim; but my patience is at last run out, and I intend to start this evening, and reach Fort Chipewyan on the 1st of February."

On the 20th, the long looked-for couriers arrived, with letters from Mr. Dease, communicating the welfare of the expedition. After writing on its affairs to the gentlemen in charge of York Factory, Norway House, and Red River, and being most liberally supplied by his worthy friend Mr. Mackenzie with everything requisite for the journey, my brother took his departure the same night.

The route from Isle à la Crosse to Athabasca, was precisely that followed by Sir John Franklin. Adhering to the general line of the summer-water communication, the road was not so readily mistaken as heretofore, and they were able to make a good part of their way during the night, which all experienced snow-shoe travellers know to be less wearisome to the spirits, than broad day, when the traverses of lakes, and long reaches of rivers, are seen in all their tedious extent, and the eyes are oppressed by the glare of snow.

This was consequently the most rapid part of his journey: on the preceding part it can scarcely be thought he loitered, seeing that he accomplished nine hundred and six miles in thirty-four days.

Some time before daylight on the 23rd, he viewed a magnificent display of the *aurora borealis*, commencing with an arch of singular lustre in the north, which suddenly flashed up towards the zenith, and represented the interior of a stupendous cone; the apex and upper part being of a bright yellow hue, while the lower assumed a very rich carmine colour. There was scarcely time to examine this resplendent phenomenon, when it disappeared.

In the afternoon of the same day, he witnessed, while crossing a lake, an extraordinary effect of the *mirage* caused by the rays of the evening sun. It covered the land to the west with a mist-like veil, and the ice even close around them seemed to *dance* with a strange undulating motion, as if tossed up and down by a heavy swell. Walking about half a mile a-head of the party, and chancing to look back, the people seemed to him to be seated on their sledges; but on arrival at the encampment, when he taxed them with their laziness, they assured him that they had been on foot the whole time, and that he appeared

to them in a recumbent attitude, borne forward as it were by some unseen power.

Travellers whose sole canopy—day and night—is the sky, necessarily see and remark many of Nature's phenomena.

On the morning of the 24th, they crossed "Portage la Loche," the dividing height between the waters falling into Hudson's Bay, and those flowing to the Arctic Ocean. The snow was very deep through this formidable barrier, and the weather was heavy and overcast.

From the hills on the north side, a thousand feet in height, they obtained that noble view of the Clear Water River, which has been drawn with so much taste and beauty by Sir George Back, though the dark day and the livery of winter were unfavourable to their full enjoyment of the prospect.

The Indians sometimes strike off from a point near this Portage, through a hilly, wooded country, direct to Athabasca Lake; and, as my brother knew that a saving of at least two days might be effected by that route, he was desirous of adopting it: but none of his men had ever followed it; and, from the report of the natives, they declared it to be impracticable for sledges: they, therefore, turned their faces down the deep and picturesque valley of the Clear Water River.

This valley is entirely sheltered from the inclement north and north-west winds; but its exposure to the east usually renders the snow deep and soft, as they found to their cost.

The timber here is larger and finer than could be expected in so northern a region; one of the pines, under the shelter of which they took up their night's lodging, measured three yards in girth, at five feet from the ground.

It is a fine country for the chase, and so little frequented in the winter, that it may be regarded as an extensive preserve. Our travellers, on several occasions, saw moose deer and wood buffalo sunning their fat sides,—a sight sufficient to make the mouths of pemican-eaters water; but they were beyond reach, and, taking the alarm, quickly disappeared.

The declivities of the hills seemed, as they passed along, completely chequered with the tracks of these and smaller animals. *Why do not some of our enthusiastic deer-stalkers make a foray into this rich preserve?*

Through the deep soft snows of the valley, as well as during the whole journey, my brother himself *raised the road*,—by far the most fatiguing duty, ordinarily taken for alternate hours by the members of a travelling party. The dogs, in fact, were so accustomed to follow him,

that, when at any time he quitted his usual station, they stopped and kept looking wistfully back; and the whips of the drivers failed to inspire them with the same ardour till he resumed the lead, when they testified their satisfaction by straining to keep at his heels, the leader often thrusting forward his black muzzle to be caressed. This fondness usually procured him the close society of a whole posse of them during the night, which, when not extremely cold, was anything but agreeable. In consequence of his care and the good treatment they received, half the number that left Red River reached Athabasca, the longest continuous journey ever performed by the same dogs; the others he exchanged on the route.

On the 27th, they came to the junction of the Clear Water with the Athabasca River. The mild weather, which had increased the toil of travelling through the deep snows of the valley, now inopportunely gave place to bitter cold. A strong north wind blew, driving in their faces a storm of snow, which almost blinded them, and made the long bleak reaches of the Athabasca doubly dreary.

The bitter cold head-wind continued for the four succeeding days; but fortunately the snow-storm was of but one day and night's duration.

In the afternoon of the 1st of February, the very day he had fixed on, before leaving Red River, as that of his arrival at his destination, he reached Fort Chipewyan, and was warmly welcomed by Mr. Smith, the officer in charge of the district of country, and by Mr. Dease, his associate in the expedition, who had not expected his arrival for more than a month to come.

"Thus," writes my brother, "happily terminated a winter journey of one thousand two hundred and seventy-seven statute miles. In the wilderness, time and space seem equally a blank; and for the same reason, the paucity of objects to mark or diversify their passage.

"The real secret of the little account which is made of distance in these North American wilds is, that there is *nothing to pay*. Every assistance is rendered to the traveller without fee or reward, while health and high spirits smile at the fatigues of the way."

The distances gone over, were as follows:—

	Miles.	Done in days.
From Fort Garry to Fort Pelly	394	15
From Fort Pelly to Carlton	276	12
From Carlton to Isle à la Crosse	236	7
Isle à la Crosse to Fort Chipewyan	371	12
	1277	46

Being a daily average of 28 miles.

CHAPTER XII.

Reasons for the Author's Preference of his Brother's Correspondence to his Narrative.—Preliminary Arrangements of the Expedition.—Feelings on entering on Arctic Discovery.

THE most vivid and comprehensive narrative that ever was or ever will be written, the most inflated eulogium ever pronounced, could not arouse one tithe of the same admiration of the supereminent merits of the great captain of the age, as a perusal of his "Dispatches."

The wonderful clearness of his views on every subject that came before him; the wisdom of his plans—plans so comprehensive as to embrace the greatest principles and the minutest details; the energy, promptness, and almost invariable success which marked their execution, have all been rendered more evident to the world by the publication of these imperishable documents, than they were even by the glorious victories which tranquillized Europe.

To say that, in a very narrow and comparatively very obscure sphere, some, if not all of

these attributes marked my brother's character and career, will not, I think, be deemed the effusion of fraternal partiality; and the parallel may be carried still further by stating that his "Narrative"* gives hardly a fair view of his merits and exertions.

The high eulogiums which that narrative elicited from the public press — eulogiums alike general and unanimous, might induce a belief that a transcript of it into these pages, would be the best method of describing my brother's labours and exertions. But a consideration of the following points will, I think, show that such is not the case. First: The narrative was one of the operations of the expedition generally; the extent of his own services, and the fact that to these services its success was wholly attributable, were, with a proper and necessary modesty, either altogether unrepresented, or represented in a very subdued light. Secondly: the narrative was penned with the view to immediate publication during the writer's lifetime; and to have obtruded or represented in any way the peculiar difficulties under which he laboured, in conse-

* "Narrative of The Discoveries on the North Coast of America, effected by the Officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, during the Years 1836-39, by Thomas Simpson, Esq." Bentley, 1843.

quence of the arrangements of the body with which he was connected, would have been impolitic and indiscreet.

There is no such restraint binding on me. A complete exposition of the virtues, the talents, and the services of an adored brother prematurely cut off in the pride of youth, and bloom of success, is the task which I undertook in penning these pages; and to effect this in a manner that can utterly absolve me from all imputation of false colouring, requires—indeed, can only be done by, a selection from his own correspondence.

It must not, however, be supposed, that a cursory glance at either his narrative or his correspondence will give a full view of the labours, fatigues, and privations which he underwent during Arctic discovery. To this fact an acute critic thus adverts in his notice of the "Narrative." "We suspect that the full extent of suffering and privation, or what other people would call suffering and privation, is not fully impressed upon the reader; because use has so "bred a habit," that whatever may be suffered, appears part and parcel of the laws of nature around them. To navigate an icy and a stormy sea in open boats — to have the spray freeze upon the rigging and the oars in dog days; to

be reduced to go without fire, either for warmth or cookery; to wade, waist high, through rivers or arms of the sea, when the thermometer was below freezing point; to have wet incrust your garments in ice, as with a robe; and lie down in a wet boat, and be frozen to the planks—all look like the extreme of misery to people at home; yet, as long as health lasts, they seem to be excitement; and even during sickness, to be borne as a common lot."

The first section of correspondence details the preliminary arrangements of the expedition, and his feelings on entering on Arctic discovery.

To the Governor and Council of the
Northern Department (of Hudson's Bay).

Fort Chipewyan, May 31st, 1837.

"GENTLEMEN,

"We have the honour to report on the progress and plans of the northern-discovery expedition since Chief Factor Dease's communication of the 3rd of January.

"Mr. Simpson arrived here from Red River on the 1st of February, bringing with him two of the expedition people, and some good dogs, for the projected establishment at Great Bear Lake.

"After an anxious consideration of our means,

and the services expected from us, we resolved to depart so far from the strict letter of your instructions of the 2nd of July, as to descend to the Arctic Sea this summer, with two small boats instead of one of larger dimensions. A craft of the latter description could scarcely be carried over the icy reefs which we may expect to find obstructing our passage along the coast; nor would a single boat so effectually provide for the safety or the success of our undertaking. The scarcity of timber of any size near the proposed winter quarters, may, besides, render it a matter of importance to bring thither such boats as, if not much injured this season, can be transported to the Coppermine River next spring, and thus serve for both voyages. This measure renders it necessary to employ two additional hands, (whom Chief Factor Smith has kindly provided,) which, for the reasons above assigned, we have no doubt you will sanction.

"John Ritch, with three men, and three Chipewyan hunters, engaged for Great Bear Lake, will proceed direct thither to erect the necessary buildings, where they will deposit such goods as we do not require on the coast; and a portion of the provisions for our eastern voyage in advance. The remainder of these provisions, together with our outfit of 1838, amounting to nearly eighty

pieces, will be transported to Fort Simpson by C. T. M'Pherson, a boat having been repaired here for that purpose; and this being an object of the utmost importance to our eventual operations, we hope that Mr. M'Pherson has been authorized to employ the new hands destined for Mackenzie's River in conveying that property to the winter quarters of the expedition, as the people there cannot possibly come for it, and the late period at which we may hope to return from the coast, precludes the probability of our being then able to render it to its destination.

"No Esquimaux interpreter having been forwarded from Churchill, we shall endeavour to induce one or two of the Loucheux about Fort Good Hope, who understand something of that language, to accompany us this summer along the coast.

"We should be wanting in proper feeling were we to close the report of our arrangements thus far, without expressing our lively sense of the obligations which the expedition and ourselves personally lie under to Chief-Factor Smith, for his prompt and liberal compliance with, and even anticipation of, our wants. We leave Fort Chipewyan with boats equipped and provisioned in such a manner as to inspire confident hopes of success in our exertions

towards completing the geographical outline of this great continent.

"Chief-Factor A. R. Macleod has handsomely volunteered to meet us with a party of Chipewyans, at the mouth of Great Fish River in the summer of 1838, and to conduct us from thence to Great Slave Lake. This plan would ensure us a safe retreat when to return along the coast might be no longer practicable; and we cannot, therefore, too strongly recommend it to your favourable consideration.*

"The Athabasca waters are uncommonly low; but a mild winter, succeeded by a mild spring, gives fair promise of an early navigation; and to-morrow we take our departure with the view

* Mr. Macleod was (he died in 1840) a fine specimen of the voyageur of the old school—hardy, enterprising, delighting in rather than shrinking from privation and fatigue,—a skilful fisherman, an unerring rifle-shot. "Let me have," said this northern rover, "a hundredweight of powder, three hundredweight of shot, a blanket, coat, and gun, for each of my Indians, and I'll meet you on the coast with provisions enough and to spare." His experience and energy leave no doubt that he would have amply redeemed his promise. The stores of the expedition couldn't furnish such a supply; its officers had no authority to appropriate Mr. Macleod to their purposes; they wrote (as we see above) however, recommending the acceptance of Mr. Macleod's spirited offer, but "cold, faint-hearted doubtings" rose in the minds of those to whom the application was addressed; and they declined it on the plea of want of authority.

of reaching the sea at the latest on the 1st of July.

"With the highest respect and regard,

"We have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

"Your most obedient servants,

"P. W. DEASE.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

LETTER TO GOVERNOR SIMPSON.

Fort Chipewyan, May 31st, 1837.

"DEAR SIR,

"As we are on the eve of our departure for the polar regions, I seize the opportunity of addressing you, in the hope that you have by this time safely reached the shores of Lake Winipeg.

"The winter was mild with little snow, the spring has been pleasant though lingering, and the waters are very low.

"I have now been four months here, but have not spent that long interval unprofitably; and my astronomical observations, I am glad to find, correspond exactly with Captain Franklin's. My walk from Red River has invigorated me in body and in mind; and the mere "office man" is laid aside for a sphere of action more congenial to both my taste and my acquirements. *Though deprived of the command after it had been first held*

out to me, and was, I think, my due, yet I enter on this enterprise with confidence and alacrity. It holds out to my imagination the prospect of realizing some, at least, of the romantic aspirations which first led me to the New World, and disappointment has given place to ardent hope. There is but one painful thought which mingles with and clouds that feeling—it is that if it be my fate to perish on this expedition, my mother will be left in comparative indigence; yet I trust that in such an event the Company, with their usual high sense of honour, would make an adequate provision for her. I know not whether my brother still remains in the service or has embraced some more promising line of life: but wherever his lot may be cast I feel satisfied, from my high opinion of him (which detraction has only served to enhance), that he will do well.

"We have received Captain Back's journal by the winter express. It contains, indeed, little thought, with no small portion of French sentimentality and self-admiration; but, altogether, I think that he has made the most of his subject, which was not a fertile one.

"Mr. Christie has forwarded to Mr. Dease an extract of a letter from Governor Pelly, stating that Captain Back's present voyage of discovery

was not to arrest or interfere with any expedition which you might have set on foot for the same object. This is most gratifying to us, and our utmost energies shall be put forth to reach the "Pole"* first; or at least to win a share of the prize. I hope that you have, this spring, ordered out Captain Ross's Journal, and the additional instruments &c., requested by me, as they are all essentially necessary.

I have procured from two intelligent Chipewyans a minute chart of the routes by the "Thelewdessey," and the Kasandessey, or White Partridge River, from Athabasca Lake to Chesterfield Inlet, into which, beyond a doubt, they empty their waters, after flowing respectively through the Doobaunt and Yath-kyed Lakes of Hearne. The latter stream is rapid, and navigable only for Indian canoes; but the former is described as broad, deep, and interrupted by only one cataract, below which the Chipewyans had their friendly rencontre with the Esquimaux last summer. There is said to be but one considerable portage of about two miles in the whole route,—which were it properly explored, might at some future time prove the most eligible channel of communication

* The magnetic Pole, is of course meant.

between the Northern Districts and Hudson's Bay.

"I think it fortunate that Mr. Dease determined on wintering at this place, which possessed a blacksmith, and many other means for the building and complete equipment of our boats, and the supply of other wantages, which Great Slave Lake could not have afforded. The abundant fishery, too, enabled Mr. Smith to keep the people concentrated; and much useful work has in consequence been got through, which could not have been done had they been scattered about searching for subsistence. Besides it is here, of course, that our whole stock of pemican for this summer can be embarked. The requisite arrangements for the transport to Great Bear Lake of our supplies for 1838, are detailed in the public letters; and the substitution of two small boats for a larger one this season is a measure that will materially contribute both to the safety, and to the success of the expedition. * * * *

"With sincere best wishes,

"I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

"Ever yours faithfully,

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO THE AUTHOR.

Red River, November 30th, 1836.

"I myself would have been ere now thoroughly disgusted with this service, had not a ray of light shone, all of a sudden, upon my path, in the shape of a mission to the Arctic regions, where, having shaken off the trammels of pounds, shillings, and pence, I hope to achieve something worthy of the education and talents bestowed upon me. In previous letters, I described to you our plan of operations; and, to-morrow, I depart on my long and uncertain journey. My only apprehension now is, that Captain Back's proposed expedition in H. M. S. 'Terror,' to Repulse Bay, (which I saw noticed in one of the last *Albions*,) may interfere with our eastern voyage; but I am uncharitable enough to wish that the same ice which has prevented the Prince Rupert from reaching York, may have also shut out the gallant captain, in which case we shall endeavour to save him all further trouble.

"Since my return from Norway House, my time has been chiefly devoted to astronomy, surveying, and chart drawing; my old mathematics were more readily polished up than I anticipated; and I have all those branches now at my fingers' ends. I have, likewise, read a

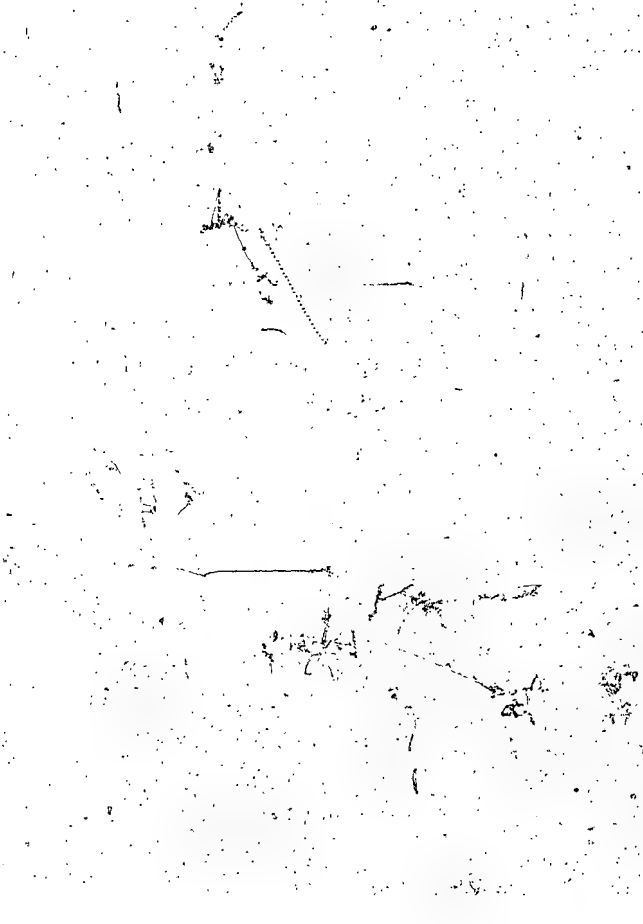
good deal, with the hope of getting rid of the stiff and ungraceful style of Rupert's land correspondence, which is still jarring in my ears, and marring the freedom of the pen that may ere long have to figure before the public.

"For our poor mother's sake, even more than my own, I pray for success in my present enterprise. But I know, that if the worst happen to me, you will cherish her; for she will then doubly need your affectionate support."

Fort Chipewyan, May 31st, 1837.

"The waters are very low, which has retarded the final disappearance of the ice; but we are now ready for a start to-morrow. We have two excellent boats for the coast—light, and of light draught, each adapted for six men; besides a third of larger dimensions for Great Bear Lake. We are thoroughly provided with provisions, clothing, and every necessary; confident in ourselves, and in our arrangements, we look up to the Ruler of the elements for a successful issue to our undertaking. Captain Back's present 'terrific' voyage is not to interfere with ours; and we are in high hopes of reaching the Pole first, perhaps dining there together. His book is a painted bauble, all ornament and conceit, and no substance.

"Hurrah for a *Husky* wife! I have got the portrait of mine at full length in Captain Franklin's last voyage. Our worthy mother favoured me with some lengthy strictures respecting Indian connexions. What would she say to see me figuring by-and-by with a young Esquimaux wife, and a pair of urchins in her boots?"



CHAPTER XIII.

Expedition from Mackenzie's River to Point Barrow.—Summer 1837.—Letters to the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, Governor Simpson, and the Author.—Opinions of the Press in regard to the Expedition's first Operations.

LETTER TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

Fort Norman, September 5th, 1837.

"HONOURABLE SIRS,

"WE have now the honour to report the complete success of the expedition this summer to the westward of Mackenzie's River.

"Our arrangements up to the departure of the expedition from Fort Chipewyan were stated in full to Governor Simpson and the Northern Council, who, no doubt, communicated them to your Honours; we shall, therefore, present a brief detail of our subsequent operations.

"On the 1st of June we quitted Fort Chipewyan, with two small sea-boats, accompanied by a luggage-boat and a party of hunters, for Great Bear Lake; visited the salt plains, and arrived at Great Slave Lake on the 10th, where

we were detained by ice until the 21st. The same cause prolonged our passage across that inland sea, and, having been for two days stopped by a strong contrary wind at the head of Mackenzie's River, it was the 1st of July when we reached Fort Norman. Our Indians cast up on the following day, and the crews and cargoes were finally divided and arranged. Our boat-builder, John Ritch, received his instructions to proceed immediately, with a fisherman, two other labourers, and the hunters, to Great Bear Lake, and at its north-eastern extremity to erect our winter-quarters, and lay in a stock of provisions against our return from the coast. We then took our departure, and on the 4th reached Fort Good Hope. There we found an assemblage of Hare Indians and Loucheux. The latter informed us that three of their tribe had been killed, and a fourth severely wounded by the Esquimaux in the preceding month, which at once put an end to our intention of procuring an interpreter from among them, although several volunteered to accompany us in that capacity. They at the same time earnestly cautioned us to beware of the treacherous arts of their enemies. On the 9th of July, we reached the ocean by the most westerly mouth of the Mackenzie, which Sir John Franklin sought for in vain.

It is situated in lat. 68° 49½′ N., long. 136° 37′ W., and perfectly answers the description which the Esquimaux messengers gave of it to that officer when they came to apprise him of the intended attack by the Mountain Indians.

"We had proceeded but a short distance to seaward when a party of nineteen men came off to us from Tent Island. We gave each of them a small present, a practice which we continued throughout the voyage, and employed our vocabularies to the best of our ability, and to their great surprise, to explain the friendly feeling of the whites towards their tribe. Being a lively and communicative people, we in the course of the season acquired some facility in our intercourse with them, and when words failed, signs supplied their place, so that we seldom experienced much difficulty in making ourselves understood, or in comprehending their meaning. When indulged, however, they always became daring and excessively troublesome, and they were ever on the look-out for plunder. On this first meeting they made several unsuccessful attempts in that way; and it was no easy matter to induce them to return to their camp after we had finished our business with them. They said, they wished to accompany us to our encampment, where they would have soon been joined by fresh

parties; and we had a shoal and dangerous navigation before us that night. We therefore peremptorily ordered them back; but it was not until we fired a ball over their heads, that they put about and paddled off. A storm soon after arose; but we made the land in safety the following morning at Shingle Point, in lat. 69°, where we were detained until the 11th. The thermometer had already fallen to 48° (Fahr.), being 30° lower than on the evening we left the Mackenzie River; and, instead of the bright and beautiful weather we enjoyed in our descent of that noble stream, we were now doomed to travel in cold dense fogs, which enveloped us during nearly the whole of our progress along the coast. But, although they perplexed and retarded us, we never allowed them to arrest our course; nor did we ever throughout the voyage encamp, but when compelled to do so by ice or contrary winds, to which line of conduct may, under Providence, be ascribed the early and successful accomplishment of our undertaking. In the afternoon of the 11th of July, we reached Point Key, where we were detained by a compact body of ice, occupying Phillip's Bay, until the 14th. There we were visited by another party of Esquimaux, whose tents were pitched at no great distance from us. They live in the coun-

try, bordering on Babbage River, and informed us that, except when flooded by the melting of the mountain snows, it is an insignificant stream, not fifty yards in breadth: of this we had ocular proof in a clear day on our return. A handsome flora was collected in this neighbourhood. Having found a passage through the ice in Phillip's Bay, we reached Herschel Island the same evening, (14th July), and had intercourse with other parties of the natives, who were pretty numerous along this part of the coast. We found on the island the skull of a whale eight feet in breadth; and whalebone is everywhere an article in extensive use among the natives, especially for the making of their nets, and the fastenings of their sledges. We continued our route before an easterly wind, along and through the ice, with very little interruption till two A.M. of the 17th, when an unbroken pack, extending to seaward, made us seek the shore in Camden Bay, near a considerable camp of Esquimaux. As soon as the fears of the latter were removed, an amicable meeting took place; and, having made them the usual presents, we purchased a good many of their mouth ornaments, weapons and other articles, which will be forwarded in due course to the Hudson's Bay House. Three of the men were remarkable for

their good looks, upright figures, and a stature of from five feet ten to six feet. They gave us a specimen of their dances, and one of them afterwards won the palm from all our people at leaping. They informed us that they have two sources of trade; the first and most regular with their countrymen, who come annually from the westward; the other with the Mountain Indians, who use fire-arms, and travel a great way across land from the direction of the Russian settlements. They showed us the knives, iron-kettles, beads, and other things thus procured, which we have no doubt are of Russian manufacture. Their means of repayment appeared to us very limited, consisting in seal-skins, whale-bone, ivory, and a few inferior furs, viz. wolvereens, foxes, and musk-rats. A pair of indifferent beaver gloves was purchased from them, which they had probably procured from the Mountain Indians, for we saw no other symptom of the existence of that valuable animal near the coast, though it doubtless abounds at some distance up the large wooded rivers which we subsequently discovered. In the afternoon, there appeared a narrow lane of water stretching outwards, and we immediately embarked. We had advanced about three miles from the land, when the ice suddenly closed upon us, before a

strong north-east wind; one of the boats got squeezed, and it was only by throwing out the cargo upon the floating masses, that she was saved from destruction. By means of portages made from one piece to another,—the oars serving as bridges,—the cargo was all recovered, and both boats finally hauled up on a large floe, where we passed an inclement and anxious night. Next morning the gale abated, the ice relaxed a little around us, and by a long circuit we regained the shore, about a league to the eastward of our former position. There we were detained till midnight of the 19th, when a favourable wind enabled us to round the body of ice at a distance of four miles from the land; and, continuing, carried us on the 20th into Foggy Island Bay. There we were stopped by the ice and a violent north-east wind until the 23rd, having on the preceding day made an ineffectual attempt to weather Point Anxiety, in which we narrowly escaped, with a thorough drenching. The latitude ashore was 70° 10′. From this situation we had the satisfaction of discovering, during a clear afternoon, a range of the rocky mountains to the westward of the Romanzoff chain, and not seen by Sir John Franklin; but, being within the limit of his survey, we called it the 'Franklin Range,' as a just tribute to his character and merits.

On the 23rd we again set sail, rounded the pack of ice, which extended six miles to seaward from Yarborough Inlet, then, abruptly turning in, we supped near Return Reef, and the survey commenced.

"Return Reef is one of a chain of reefs and islets which runs for twenty miles parallel to the coast, at the distance of about half a league, affording water enough within for such light craft as ours; the mainland is very low. From 'Point Berens' to 'Cape Halkett' (named after two members of your Honourable Board) it forms a great bay, fifty miles broad by a third of that depth, which in honour of the Deputy-Governor was named 'Harrison's Bay.' At the bottom of this bay another picturesque branch of the Rocky Mountain range—the last seen by us—rears its lofty peaks above these flat shores: we called them 'Pelly's Mountains,' in honour of the Governor of the Company. At their base flows a large river, two miles broad at its mouth, which we named after Andrew Colville, Esq. This river freshens the water for many miles, and its alluvial deposits have rendered Harrison's Bay so shallow, that it was not till after a run of twenty-five hours, during which we had repeatedly to stand well out to seaward, that we could effect a landing on a grounded iceberg, nine miles to

the south-west of Cape Halkett. A north-east gale kept us there the whole of the following day. The country extending to the foot of the mountains appeared to consist of plains covered with short grass and moss, the favourite pasture of the reindeer, of which we saw numerous herds. Observations were obtained, determining our position to be in lat. 70° 43′ N., long. 152° 14′ W.; variation of the compass 40° E. Next morning (26th July) the tide rose nearly two feet at six A M., and enabled us safely to cross the shoals. At no great distance from our encampment we passed the mouth of another large river, one mile broad, whose banks were thickly lined with drift timber. We named it the 'Garry,' in honour of Nicholas Garry, Esq. Cape Halkett forms the extreme point of a small island, separated from the main shores by a narrow channel too shallow for boats. Its situation was likewise found by observation to be in lat. 70° 48′ N., long. 151° 55′ W. It appears to be a place of resort to the Esquimaux, for we found a spot where they had been building their baidars last spring. We suppose them to have been part of a very large camp, which we saw in the bay of Staines River, as we sailed past the east end of Flaxman Island on the 20th of July; that this camp consisted of the western traders of that

tribe, on their annual journey to meet their eastern brethren at Barter Island; and that we missed them on our return, from the circumstance of their being then dispersed along the rivers, lakes, and in the skirts of the mountains hunting the reindeer.

"From thence the coast turned suddenly off to the west-north-west. It presented nothing to the eye but a succession of low banks of frozen mud. The ice was heavy all along, but there were narrow channels close to the shore; the soundings on these averaged one fathom on sandy bottom. In the evening we passed the mouth of a considerable river, which was named after William Smith, Esq. From thence, for about six miles, the coast-line is formed of gravel reefs, near the extremity of which, at 'Point Pitt,' (called after another member of your Honourable Board,) the land trends more to the westward. The ice lay much closer here; numerous masses adhered to the bottom under the water, which obliged us to search for a passage out from the shore. The night was dark and stormy, and we were in considerable danger; one of the rudders gave way, but we at length effected a landing on a place near an immense reindeer pound. This was ingeniously formed by the Esquimaux with double rows of turf, set

upon a ridge of ground enclosing a hollow four miles by two, the end farthest from the beach terminating in a lake, into which the unsuspecting animals are driven, and there despatched with spears. The vegetable soil in this vicinity was barely four inches in depth, beneath which the clay was frozen as hard as rock, so that our tent pickets could not be driven home. The men had to go a good mile to find a log or two of drift-wood for fuel, the scarcity of which essential article is doubtless the chief cause of the want of inhabitants along so great a portion of the coast. We were detained at this place till the following afternoon (27th), when the ice opening a little, enabled us to resume our route. It blew a cutting blast from the north-east, and the salt water froze upon the oars and rigging. 'Point Drew,' called after Richard Drew, Esq., seven miles distant from our last encampment, is the commencement of a bay of considerable size, but extremely shallow, and much encumbered with ice, in pushing through which the boats received several blows; and we had on this, as on many other occasions, to admire their excellent workmanship. To seaward the ice was still smooth and solid, as in the depth of a sunless winter. At midnight we reached a narrow projecting point, across which the peaks of some high icebergs appeared,

and were from a distance mistaken for lodges of the natives. This point we named 'Cape George Simpson,' as a mark of respect for our worthy governor. It was destined to be the limit of our boat navigation, for during the four following days we were only able to advance as many miles. The weather was foggy and dismally cold, the wild fowl passed in long flights to the westward, and there seemed little prospect of our being able to reach Point Barrow by water. 'Boat Extreme' is situated in lat. 71° 3′ N., long. 154° 26′ W.; variation of the compass, 42° E.

"Under the above circumstances Mr. Simpson undertook to complete the journey on foot, and accordingly started on the 1st of August with a party of five men. They carried with them their arms, some ammunition, pemican, a small oiled canvas canoe for the crossing of rivers, the necessary astronomical instruments, and a few trinkets for the natives. It was one of the worst days of the whole season, and the fog was so dense, that the pedestrians were under the necessity of rigidly following the tortuous outline of the coast, which for twenty miles formed a sort of irregular inland bay, (being guarded without by a series of gravel reefs,) the shore of which was almost on a level with the water, and intersected innumerable salt creeks, through which

they waded, besides three considerable rivers or inlets, which they traversed in their portable canoe. They found at one place a great many large wooden sledges, joined with whalebone and strongly shod with horn. Mr. Simpson conjectures that these vehicles were left there by the western Esquimaux, already spoken of, on their eastward journey, to be resumed again on their return, when winter sets in. The tracks of reindeer were everywhere numerous. Next day the weather improved, and at noon the latitude 71° 10′ was observed. The land now inclined to the south-west, and continued very low, muddy, and, as on the preceding day, abounding in salt creeks, whose waters were at the freezing temperature. The party had proceeded about ten miles, when, to their dismay, the coast suddenly turned off to the southward, forming an inlet extending as far as the eye could reach; at the same moment they descried, at no great distance, a small camp of the western Esquimaux, to which they immediately directed their steps. The men were absent hunting, and the women and children took to their boats in the greatest alarm, leaving behind them an infirm man, who was in an agony of fear. A few words of friendship removed his apprehensions, and brought back the fugitives, who were equally surprised and delighted to

behold white men. They set before the party fresh reindeer-meat and seal-oil, and besought them for tobacco (tawăccah), of which, men, women, and even children, are inordinately fond. Mr. Simpson now determined to adopt a more expeditious mode of travelling, and applied for the loan of one of their "oomiaks" or family canoes, to convey the party to Point Barrow, with which, from a chart drawn by one of the most intelligent of the women, it appeared that these people were acquainted. The request was immediately complied with; four oars were fitted with lashings to this strange craft, and the ladies declared that our party were true Esquimaux and not "Kabloonan." Before starting, the hunters arrived, and were likewise gratified with tobacco, awls, buttons, and other trifles. "Dease's Inlet" is five miles broad at this place, yet so low is the land, that the one shore is just visible from the other, in the clearest weather. It now again blew strongly from the north-east, bringing back the cold dense fog, but the traverse was effected by aid of the compass. The waves ran high, and the skin boat surmounted them with a buoyancy which far surpassed that of our boasted north canoes. The party encamped on the west side of the inlet. The banks there were of frozen mud ten or twelve feet high; the country within was

perfectly flat, abounded in small lakes, and produced a very short grass, but nowhere had the thaw penetrated more than two inches beneath the surface, while under water along the shore, the bottom was still impenetrably frozen. Not a log of wood was to be found in this land of desolation, but our party followed the example of the natives, and made their fire of the roots of the dwarf-willow in a little chimney of turf. Next morning (August 3rd) the fog cleared for awhile, but it was still bitterly cold, and the swell beat high on the outside of a heavy line of ice which lay packed on the shore. The latter, after extending five miles to the northward, turned off to the north-west, beyond which the latitude 71° 13′ was observed. From this point the coast trended more westerly for ten miles, until the party came to what appeared a large bay, where they stopped for two or three hours, to await the dispersion of the fog, not knowing which way to steer. In the evening their wish was gratified, and from that time the weather became comparatively fine. The bay was now ascertained to be only four miles in width: the depth half way across, was one fathom and a half on a bottom of sand; that of Dease's Inlet was afterwards found to be two fathoms, muddy bottom, being the greatest depth between Return Reef and Point

Barrow, except at ten miles south-east from Cape Halkett, where three fathoms on sand were sounded on our return. After crossing "Mackenzie's Bay" the coast again trended for eight or nine miles to the W.N.W. A compact body of ice extended all along, and beyond the reach of vision to seaward; but the party carried their light vessel within that formidable barrier, and made their way through the narrow channels close to the shore. At midnight they passed the mouth of a fine deep river, a quarter of a mile wide, to which Mr. Simpson gave the name of "Belle Vue," and in less than an hour afterwards, the rising sun gratified him with the view of Point Barrow stretching out to the N.N.W. They soon crossed Elson Bay, (which in the perfect calm had acquired a coating of young ice,) but had no small difficulty in making their way through a broad and heavy pack that rested upon the shore. On reaching it, and seeing the ocean extending away to the southward on the opposite side of the Point, they hoisted their flag, and with three cheers took possession of their discoveries in his Majesty's name.

"Point Barrow is a long low spit, composed of gravel and coarse sand, which the pressure of the ice has forced up into numerous mounds, that, viewed from a distance, assume the appear-

ance of huge boulder rocks. At the spot where the party landed, it is only a quarter of a mile across, but is broader towards its termination. The first object that presented itself on looking round the landing-place, was an immense cemetery. The bodies lay exposed in the most horrible and disgusting manner; and many of them appeared so fresh, that some of the men became alarmed that the cholera or some other dreadful disease was raging among the natives. Two considerable camps of the latter stood at no great distance on the Point; but none of the inmates ventured to approach till our party first visited them, and with the customary expressions of friendship dissipated their apprehensions. A brisk traffic then commenced, after which the women formed a circle and danced to a variety of airs, some of which were pleasing to the ear. The whole conduct of these people was friendly in the extreme; they seemed to be well acquainted with the character if not the persons of white men; were passionately fond of tobacco; and when any of the younger people were too forward, the seniors restrained them, using the French phrase, "c'est assez," which, like "tawäccah," they must have learned from the Russian traders. They designate the latter "Noonatagmun;" and a respectable-looking old man

readily took charge of a letter addressed by Mr. Simpson to them, or to any other whites on the western coast, containing a brief notice of the proceedings of the expedition. To the northward, enormous icebergs covered the ocean; but on the western side there was a fine open channel, which the Esquimaux assured the party extended all along to the southward; and so inviting was the prospect in that direction, that, had such been his object, Mr. Simpson would not have hesitated a moment to prosecute the voyage to Cook's Inlet in his skin canoe. The natives informed him, that whales were numerous to the northward of the Point; and seals were everywhere sporting among the ice. These Esquimaux were well clothed in seal and reindeer skins; the men all used mouth ornaments; and the "tonsure" on the crown of the head was universal among both men and boys; the women had their chins tattooed, but did not wear the lofty top-knots of hair which are fashionable to the eastward. They were very inquisitive about the names of our party, and equally communicative of their own. A number of their words were taken down, some of which are different from the corresponding terms given by Sir Edward Parry, but the greater part are either the same or dissimilar only in their terminations.

They lay their dead on the ground, with their heads all turned to the north. There was nothing else either in their manners or habits remarked as differing from the well-known characteristics of the tribe, except an ingenious and novel contrivance for capturing wild fowl. It consists of six small perforated ivory balls, attached separately to cords of sinew three feet long, the ends of which being tied together, an expanding sling is thus formed, which, dexterously thrown up at the birds as they fly past, entangles and brings them to the ground.

"Mr. Simpson could not learn that there had been any unusual mortality among this part of the tribe, and is of opinion that the concourse of natives who frequent Point Barrow at different periods of the year, coupled with the coldness of the climate, sufficiently account for the numerous remains already noticed. It was high water between one and two o'clock A.M. and P.M.; the rise of the tide was fourteen inches; and the flood came from the westward. Observations were obtained which determined the position of the landing-place to be in lat. 71° 23½′ N., long. 156° 20′ W., agreeing closely with the observations of Mr. Elson. Then, bidding adieu to their good-humoured and admiring entertainers, the party set out on their return. They

were arrested that evening by the ice; but next morning, (August 5,) it opened and allowed them to proceed. At a late hour they reached the camp of the Esquimaux in Dease's Inlet; and, after liberally recompensing them for the loan of their canoe, directed some of the men to follow to Boat Extreme, where it would be left for them. Then continuing their route all night, at five A.M. on the 6th, the party rejoined the main body of the expedition.

"We commenced our return the same afternoon and, being favoured by a light wind, and an almost open sea, we sailed all night; and, next day, (August 7,) at noon, reached Cape Halkett. We then steered across Harrison's Bay: the wind increasing to a gale we shipped much water, but persevering, under treble-reefed sails, at three P.M. of the 8th, we landed safely at 'Fawn River,' within view of the point where our survey commenced. The position of this encampment was ascertained by good observations, to be in lat. 70° 25′ N., long. 148° 25′ W. The gale having moderated, we re-embarked the following afternoon; and, running without intermission before a fresh breeze, we reached Demarcation Point to breakfast on the 11th. Several showers of snow fell during this run, and it was piercingly cold. The Romanzoff and British mountains had

assumed the early livery of another winter. The ice in Camden Bay was still very heavy; but it protected us from the dangerous swell to which we became exposed after passing Barter Island. Soon after leaving Demarcation Point, the ice became so closely wedged, that we could no longer pursue our way through it. The following day, (August 12,) it opened a little, and the weather becoming fine, we put out and advanced for a few hours, when the mountainous swell and heavy ice obliged us to seek the shore, which we reached with some difficulty, between Backhouse River and Mount Conybeare. There we were detained until the 15th. The icebergs which begirt the coast were of great size, and of every imaginable shape; but from the summit of a hill, six miles in land, we had an unbounded prospect of the blue ocean stretching to the north. The pasture in the deep valleys among the mountains was luxuriant; herds of reindeer were browsing there, and we procured some venison. In the night of the 14th, the stars and aurora borealis were first visible. The following morning we resumed our route, and the weather continuing nearly calm, we reached the western mouth of the Mackenzie on the 17th, and there encamped. The first Esquimaux seen during our return from Boat Extreme, were at Beaufort Bay, but from

thence to the vicinity of the Mackenzie, we were continually falling in with small parties, many of whom we had seen on the outward voyage. We maintained a friendly intercourse with them all, and they were very anxious to know whether we were soon to visit them again. The habitations on Tent Island were abandoned in consequence, we understood, of an alarm that the Loucheux meditated a descent to revenge the murder of their friends.

"We have but few general remarks to add to the foregoing narrative. The tides all along the coast were semi-diurnal; the flood coming from the westward. The rise, however, was strongly affected by the winds and ice; and our opportunities of observing were but few. At Boat Extreme, the average rise was fifteen inches; high water from one and to two o'clock, A.M. and P.M. The rise generally decreased to the eastward; and at Point Kay it was only eight or nine inches. That the main sea is clear and navigable by ships during the summer months, the long rolling swell we encountered on our return, and the view obtained from the mountains, furnish tolerable proof. We likewise saw some whales on our return. The prevalence of east and north-east winds during the early part of the summer is a remarkable fact. We

were indeed favoured by a westerly wind for five days on our return; but this was almost the only exception. At a more advanced period of the season, however, the winds blew more from the west and north-west. It is now certain that from Kotzebue's Sound to Cape Parry, there is not a harbour into which a ship can safely enter, but it must be a very unpropitious season that would not admit of achieving that portion of the Arctic navigation; and another year ought certainly to suffice for the remainder, whether the voyage were commenced from Barrow's, or from Behring's Strait. On this subject, however, we shall be better able to offer an opinion if successful in our next summer's operations.

"The natural history of the coast from Return Reef to Point Barrow, is meagre in the extreme. In the botanical kingdom, scarcely a flower or moss was obtained in addition to the collection made on other parts of the coast. In zoology, reindeer, arctic foxes, one or two limmings, seals, white owls, snow buntings, grouse (*Lagopus salicite et rupestres*), and various well-known species of water-fowl, were the only objects met with; while in the mineralogical department there was not a rock *in sitû* or boulder-stone found along an extent of more than two hun-

dred miles of coast. The variation of the compass was found to have increased from one to three degrees at the corresponding points where observations had been made by Sir John Franklin. At Boat Extreme, on the other hand, it was only twenty-one minutes greater than that stated by Mr. Elson at Point Barrow, where, by continuing the proportion, the quantities would coincide. The moon was never once visible during the whole outward and homeward voyage, till our return to the western mouth of Mackenzie, where a set of distances was obtained, and the longitudes of the other points reduced back from thence by means of a very valuable watch, generously lent to the expedition by Chief-Factor Smith.

"The map of our discoveries will be prepared and transmitted to your Honours in the spring.

"Our ascent of the Mackenzie has not been characterised by any circumstance of particular interest. The weather continued calm and beautiful; and the journey was performed entirely by towing, in which manner we advanced at the rate of from thirty to forty miles a-day. The river has fallen very low, and the fisheries have, in consequence, been unproductive, causing a scarcity of provisions, both at Fort Good Hope, and among the natives. We saw a good many of

the Loucheux, but the Hare Indians were all dispersed in the interior, searching for subsistence. From the coast up to Point Separation moose-deer were numerous—being quite undisturbed; but from our first falling in with the Loucheux, no vestiges of either moose or reindeer have been seen. We reached this place yesterday with half of our summer's stock of provisions still forthcoming, and are now awaiting with impatience the arrival of our outfit and dispatches.

"Some Indians from Great Bear Lake have brought us intelligence of the party sent to establish our winter-quarters. They were stopped in Bear Lake River by ice during the whole month of July; lost one of their canoes; and it was not till about the 6th ult. that they passed Fort Franklin, after which they had the prospect of an unimpeded passage across the lake. The continued easterly winds were the cause of this vexatious detention, during which the Dogribs kindly supported our people with the produce of their nets.

"*Sept.* 8.—We have this morning received Governor Simpson's letter, dated London, 11th of November last, and have to offer our lively acknowledgments to your Honours for the interest you have been pleased to express in the success of the expedition, and in the welfare of ourselves and party.

"We have duly received the journals of Captain Back's last expedition, and are glad to find that his new undertaking is in no way to interfere with our original instructions.

"Your Honours may rest assured that our efforts in the cause of discovery and science next summer, to the eastward of the Coppermine River, will not be less zealous than they have this season been in another field, and we are sanguine in the hope that they will be crowned with equal success.

"Our supplies for next season have come to hand. They were delivered in very indifferent order at Portage la Loche, and there was a considerable deficiency in the weights of the pemican; but with the quantity saved of this year's stock there will be provisions enough for next summer's operations, and we have no further demands to make upon the Dépôt for goods.

"We send two men express to Great Slave Lake with this dispatch, and to meet the spring packet, the non-arrival of which causes us some anxiety; and to-morrow we take our departure for winter-quarters.

"We are, &c.,

"PETER W. DEASE.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER TO GOVERNOR SIMPSON.

Fort Norman, September 8th, 1837.

"I AM proud of the interest felt by their Honours" (the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company) "in our expedition: and hope that our present dispatches will show that your confidence in our zeal has not been misplaced.

"I do not know what pecuniary reward is attached by the King's orders in Council to that portion of the Arctic navigation completed by us this summer; but I trust that you will ascertain this point, and not allow our interests to be overlooked.

"You were pleased to tell me that my services as your Secretary at Red River had earned a Chief-tradership;* now, however, I have the *exclusive* honour of unfurling the Company's flag on Point Barrow, and of thus uniting the Arctic to the Western Ocean,—which I humbly think entitles me to the second step. Consider, I beseech you, the importance of the geographical problem solved; the able officers whom it baffled; the rewards conferred upon them for what they effected; and do not reject my just claims, although I am one of your own relatives. I

* The correspondence in the sequel will show that the promises made to my brother were *not* fulfilled.

have always (*in despite of harsh treatment**) confided implicitly in your kind sentiments towards me, and feel that they will be fully displayed on the present occasion. Such preferment, instead of cooling my zeal, would animate and inflame it, and at the same time give me the standing requisite to the creditable production of our travels to the world. Mr. Dease is a good, honourable man. I believe I have acquired his friendship, for in everything, even to the plan of our little Fort Confidence, he has adopted my advice, and has left the direction of the march entirely to me; the result proves that it has not languished under my directions; *indeed in such a service the surveyor must, of necessity, act as guide. While the whole onus of the duty thus rests on me, I cannot help feeling sore that you should have considered it necessary to entrust another with the command.*

"We take our departure to-morrow, for winter quarters; and hope to get our admirable little sea-boats taken some distance up Dease's River this fall, in order to lessen our portage labours in the spring."

The above detailed intelligence of the com-

* The passages in italics are in the rough drafts, but scored out, as if not inserted in the fair copies. I retain them as expressions of my brother's feelings.

plete success of the expedition — which was dispatched by express couriers from Fort Norman on the 10th of September, and which was forwarded, with much alacrity, from post to post, through the Indian Country, reached England only on the 19th of April of the following year (1838),—a proof of the remoteness of the region whence the expedition started. It reached my station at Moose Factory on the 24th of March; and my delight on receiving the letter whence I extract the following, may easily be conceived.

"Fortune and its great Disposer have this season smiled upon my undertakings, and shed the first bright beams upon the dark prospect of a North American life. Yes, my dearest brother, congratulate me, for I, and I *alone*, have the well-earned honour of uniting the Arctic to the great Western Ocean, and of unfurling the British flag on Point Barrow.

"On the 23rd of July we supped on Franklin's Return Reef, and having a noble run across two large bays, (at the bottom of the first of which rose a majestic branch of the rocky mountains washed by two great rivers,) on the 27th we were brought to a final stand by the ice at Boat Extreme, in lon. 154° 26′. Nearly one third of the distance still remained unexplored,

and I resolved to complete it on foot, Mr. Dease most handsomely volunteering to remain with the boats, and thus secure our retreat. I took five men with me, and, in addition to our arms, instruments, and necessaries, we carried a small canvas canoe for crossing rivers. It was desperately cold, and the fog so dense as to be almost tangible. We were wet to the waist with wading through salt creeks and shallow inlets, and if our case while marching was bad, in the camp it was infinitely worse.

"On the second evening by God's Providence we fell in with the first camp of the Western Esquimaux, and from them I procured an *oomiak*, or family canoe, with which we crossed some deep inlets and bays that we never could have walked round; and, being a highly seaworthy craft, we now carried on through thick and thin, and at 2 A.M. of the 4th ult. attained the object of my ardent wishes. We were soon surrounded by a crowd of the natives, to whom Cape North is a place of great resort; but they were, in appearance, most friendly; and a fine old fellow took charge of a letter to the Russians, briefly noticing our proceedings. The women danced around us, and were indefatigable in their blandishments. They are w——s without an exception. The men are a set of lousy,

good-humoured, thievish, pimping rogues. Without fire-arms I should be sorry to trust to their tender mercies, notwithstanding their smiling physiogs.

"I rejoined Mr. Dease at 5 A.M. of the 6th, and we continued our return the same day. We were favoured by a clearer sea, and strong westerly gales, and after a few detentions from the ice and storms we regained the western mouth of the Mackenzie on the 17th of August, after a most successful cruise of thirty-nine days. We ran many a desperate risk in that cruize. In Camden Bay we were caught by the ice, three miles from the land, had to throw out our cargoes upon the floating masses to save our sweet little boats, and after making several portages, the oars serving as the perilous bridges from fragment to fragment, we at last got boats and ladings secured on a large floe, where we passed a horrible night. On another occasion, in a vast bay beyond Return Reef, we sailed twenty-five hours in a dense fog, thirteen of these out of sight of land, before we could effect a landing. We never encamped but for ice, or contrary winds, it being constant daylight; and, when weary, slept by watches in the boats. The thermometer ranged between 30° and 40° of Fahr., and we wore our winter dresses, and

Esquimaux waterproof boots. Yet with all these precautions few of the men escaped without severe sore throats.

"I am charmed with the scenery of the Mackenzie: the weather, after we re-entered it, was beautiful, and ascending with the towing-line at the rate of from thirty to forty miles per day, we reached this place on the 4th instant. I have since been incessantly employed on public dispatches, which is my apology for this meagre outline; but you shall hear from me once or twice from winter quarters."

The following from the *Morning Chronicle*, may be taken as a fair exposition of the light in which the success of the expedition was viewed by the world.

"The question which has been a geographical problem for upwards of two centuries,—the *north-west passage* around the continent of America,—is at length determined, and we have the satisfaction to lay before our readers, in another column, an abstract of the Journals of the intrepid discoverers, by whose enterprise the object has been accomplished, and in the progress of which they have evinced intelligence, activity, and hardihood not inferior to any of those daring and enduring men who have preceded them in the arduous path of arctic discovery.

"Referring our general readers to the manly and unpretending narrative of the gentlemen who conducted this expedition, so honourable in the annals of British commercial enterprise, we beg leave to point out to our more scientific readers the interest belonging to the geographical, and we may say topographical, questions determined by the observations of Messrs. Dease and Simpson. The fact of the Continent of America being circumnavigated; the determination of the latitude of its northern extremity, in the attempts to ascertain which so many expeditions of different nations have been unsuccessful; the knowledge that the great mountain ridge, extending from Magellan's Straits to the most northern parts of the American continent, previously known, actually reaches the shores of the Arctic Sea; all these are highly interesting discoveries.

"The completion of the survey of the North American coast, from the Coppermine river to some part of Hudson's Bay, will be highly interesting as connecting the discoveries and observations of Captains Parry, Franklin, and Back, as well as determining whether Captain Ross's *Boothia Felix* is a peninsula or an island; but looking on the chart at the position of Parry's *Melville Island*, and Franklin's *Point Turnagain*,

there can be no doubt of a communication *by sea*, whether *navigable* or not, existing from Baffin's Bay to the westward of these points: and therefore we consider that, although the whole of the northern coast of the American Continent has not yet been actually surveyed; yet that by connecting the surveys of Captains Franklin and Beechey,—or, in other words, completing the survey of the coast from Behring's Straits to Mackenzie's River, *the question of the long-sought north-west passage* is at length determined."

CHAPTER XIV.

Transactions, Autumn 1837 to Spring 1838, detailed in Letters. — Climate of Fort Confidence. — Housekeeping there.

"Fort Confidence, September 25, 1837.

"GENTLEMEN,

"After a long and stormy passage across Great Bear Lake, during which we experienced the rigours of winter, we arrived here in safety this evening, in company with the servants and Indians employed by Chief-Trader Macpherson, to transport our outfit and provisions for the ensuing summer. These people will be dispatched back to Fort Simpson to-morrow, and we embrace the opportunity to give you a brief sketch of the summer transactions at this place, and of our prospects of maintenance for the winter.

"The site judiciously chosen by John Ritch for this establishment is about three miles from the mouth of Dease's River, in a strait formed by a large island with the northern shore of the

Lake. He reached here with his party on the 16th ult., and since then has completed a store and erected the shell of a dwelling-house.

"We are concerned to say that the Chipewyan hunters brought from Athabasca have quite disappointed our expectations. After indolently wasting the best part of the hunting season, they are now laid up with influenza, which has been going the round of all the Indians in this quarter. The Dogribs, however, promise to bring us some provisions. In the interval, the nets at the door have supported Ritch and his men, and we shall immediately make proper dispositions for our winter fisheries,—the most distant of which will be about fifteen miles from hence.

"It is most fortunate that we got two small boats built at Fort Chipewyan last spring instead of a large one; and that we have brought these fine craft safely hither, for there is not in any part of Great Bear Lake, on this side of Fort Franklin, timber fit for the construction of a boat of any description.

"We have only to add, that our utmost efforts shall be exerted to achieve the service prescribed us next summer; and we trust that our success will be equal to that with which Providence has crowned our labours of this season.

"The winter may be said to have commenced here, the ground being covered with snow, and the frost already severe.

"We shall again do ourselves the pleasure of addressing you by the Mackenzie's River March express. Meanwhile,

"We have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

"PETER W. DEASE.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

"To the Governor, Chief Factors, and Chief Traders of the Northern Department."

TO THE SAME.

"Fort Confidence, Jan. 22nd, 1838.

"We have now the honour of acknowledging Governor Simpson's letter, dated Norway House June 30th, 1837; and received on the 29th of December.

"At the same time it is our melancholy duty to report the death of one of the bearers—Peter Taylor,—occasioned by a pulmonary complaint of old standing; and accelerated, perhaps, by the fatigue of the journey. He lingered a long time after he became unable to advance further, during which he was carefully attended by his companion (a Maskegon Indian named 'Le Sourd'), who shot several deer around their encampment, and on the poor fellow's decease

interred his body. This distressing event occurred on a large arm of the Lake, stretching halfway between Dease's Bay and the Coppermine River, which was first discovered by Mr. Simpson on a hunting excursion some time previous. Le Sourd's track, while vainly searching in Simpson's Bay for the establishment, alarmed a small camp of Dogrib Indians stationed in the vicinity, to such a degree that they fled hither in the utmost terror. Conjecturing the true cause, Mr. Simpson immediately started to bring relief to the strangers; but, after six days journey, during which he made the circuit of the northern part of that extensive bay, he returned without being able to trace their retreat. It was at this very date (12-13 December,) that Taylor expired. Le Sourd then resolved to retrace his steps to Fort Norman; but at Cape Macdonell he fortunately fell in with another party of Indians, who conducted him hither.

"We have entered on this long relation in order to preclude the possibility of misrepresentation; as in a late spiteful production we observe, among other calumnies, that the Company's officers are charged with wilfully exposing to starvation the people under their command,—an accusation as false as it is malicious.

"In consequence of Governor Simpson's de-

parture for Norway House before the arrival of the Athabasca boats, no notice has been taken of our dispatch of the 31st of May. It contained an offer on the part of Chief-Factor Macleod, to conduct a party of Chipewyans to meet us at the mouth of Great Fish River this ensuing summer, with a list of supplies required for that service. A precaution of this nature was suggested in our original instructions, and was discussed in Mr. Dease's letter of the 3rd of January; but is now altogether nugatory. While we publicly offer Mr. Macleod the tribute of our thanks for his gallant proposal, we beg to assure the Governor and Council that, though this channel of retreat be cut off, our ardour in the noble cause in which we are engaged knows no abatement.

"Notwithstanding the extraordinary severity of last summer, the blank on the *western* coast was minutely explored, as will be seen by the accompanying chart. That part of Governor Simpson's latest instructions, which recommends a second attempt in the same quarter, is therefore anticipated; indeed, from this point such an undertaking would with our means have been quite impracticable, as the ice on Great Bear Lake seldom breaks up till the month of August. But as the coast to the *eastward*

may present a field for the labours of two seasons, we have availed ourselves of the full powers granted to us by applying to the gentlemen in charge of the Athabasca and Mackenzie's River districts, to forward hither, this ensuing fall, an additional supply of pemican, leather, sledge-wood, dogs, and some articles without which we cannot subsist. Our men have consented to prolong their engagements, if necessary, on condition of their wantages now enclosed to the gentleman in charge of Norway House being forwarded to Great Slave Lake by the Athabasca brigade; for ere the lapse of a fourth year they will all be worn to the buff. For ourselves we make no demands whatever.

"The region surrounding this desolate abode is mountainous, stormy, and unsheltered. Both men and dogs are often severely frost-bitten, while traversing it for food. We have tried various winter fisheries, both far and near; but one after another they have failed before the rigour of the cold. One, however, ten miles to the southward, still maintains a few hands; others are dispersed among the distant camps; and the few residents are supported by our Chipewyan hunters, and the native Indians. We are happy to add that the influenza at length passed over without occasioning more than one

or two deaths, and these among the aged; our own people are all in perfect health.

"When we arrived here on the 25th of September, Dease's River was already fast. We were therefore unable to transport our sea-boats by water to the height of land, as we had contemplated. The long and toilsome portage will be commenced by stages in March; and Mr. Simpson will precede the party for the purpose of surveying the most practicable route to the Coppermine River. We propose taking our final departure from this place on the 1st of June. Another opportunity will occur of addressing you before that period.

"We have the honour, &c., &c.,

"PETER W. DEASE.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

I select the following from a file of dispatches of a similar nature, as evidence of the anxious providence, and minute attention to details, which marked the conduct of this expedition.

"Fort Confidence, January 23rd, 1838.

"DEAR SIR,

"In consequence of a third voyage to the eastern coast in 1839, proposed by us, it became necessary, in order to obtain the consent of our people, to promise them a supply of necessaries

from Norway House, by the Athabasca brigade of this season. A list to that effect is enclosed, which you will be pleased to complete; and we have requested the gentleman in charge of the Athabasca district to transport the property to Great Slave Lake.

"We are unfortunately unprovided with a nautical almanac for the year 1839, and unless we can obtain one in time, we shall not consider ourselves justified in venturing our party in an unknown country. We have therefore to request, that immediately upon receipt of this an express be despatched to York Factory, and another to Red River, with the enclosed letters; and that the book, together with any instruments, &c., for the expedition, be forwarded at any cost, so as to overtake the Athabasca boats; or, if that be impossible, at least to reach us here in the spring of 1839.

"Our authority from the Governor and Council fully empowers us to make the above or any other demands; while we feel assured that your own good feelings towards the expedition will ensure your particular attention to them.

"We remain,

"PETER W. DEASE,

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

"To the Gentleman in charge of
Norway House."

EXTRACT TO GOVERNOR SIMPSON.

"Fort Confidence, January 29, 1838.

"Throughout the whole country, last summer was remarkable for its inclemency. We ourselves were detained a fortnight by the ice in Great Slave Lake. Ritch and his assistants were, after they separated from us, stopped for nearly forty days; and, had it not been for our indomitable perseverance, and my singular journey from Boat Extreme to Cape Barrow, that interesting point would never have been reached; nor could the Company have gained that distinction by any renewed exertions of ours *this* season from our present position, as the ice of Great Bear Lake, which seldom opens before August, would have presented an insurmountable barrier to such an attempt.

"Winter overtook us during our passage of this vast and boisterous lake in September, and we were threatened with being set fast; but, by a bold push across from the western to the eastern side, guided by chart and compass, we safely reached our infant establishment on the 25th. Dease's River was already frozen, and our plan of transporting our little sea-boats up its waters to the height of land was therefore unavailing. The climate here is indeed in-

tensely severe, and the mean temperature of the current month is lower perhaps than any upon record. The bare and stormy character of the country, and the long disappearance of the sun, contribute greatly to aggravate the rigour of the cold. I was, however, determined to inure myself to the worst; and, in order to eke out our scanty subsistence, spent the greater part of the time until Christmas in hunting excursions with various parties of Indians; during which I discovered another extensive arm of this inland sea, terminating nearly east from hence, fully half-way to the Coppermine River. It was somewhere near that bay that poor Taylor breathed his last. Had its existence been known to us last spring, it would have been our wintering-place; although, from its scanty clothing of stunted straggling trees, and its lofty encircling hills, it would have afforded but a very sorry residence.

"It was a month after our arrival here before the houses were habitable; though very small, they still remain in a miserable unfinished state; and, from a neglect of the fall fishery, our living was for a long time literally from hand to mouth. Mr. Dease is a very worthy man; but he is dull and indolent. We live together, old wife and all, on the happiest terms: and I now under-

stand that mysterious science—the management of an inland post—as intimately as if I had spent the last long nine years on the north side of Portage-la-loche. Time flies quickly enough even in this desolate abode; though, not having Captain Back's good fortune in obtaining newspapers and periodicals, the rest of the world is dead to us. My stay at the house is, however, drawing nigh to a close, as I intend starting in March to survey the route to the Coppermine, and to mark out the best ground for the boats and baggage to follow. The plan of the portage by stages is entirely my own, and I have every hope of effecting this laborious duty successfully. The provisions saved by the rapidity of our last summer's voyage will meet the heavy consumption on the portage without drawing on our sea-stock."

EXTRACTS TO THE AUTHOR.

"Fort Confidence, Jan. 29, 1838.

"My last to you was from Fort Norman in September, announcing our safe and early return from our first glorious campaign: I should say *mine*, for mine alone was the victory.

"Our passage of this great and stormy lake in September was long and severe. Winter overtook us, but we safely reached our infant Confidence' on the 25th of that month. The

country was then covered with snow. Dease's River and all the smaller lakes were fast. The climate is, indeed, intensely cold, the land mountainous, and the scanty clothing of stunted and straggling spruce firs confined to the immediate borders of the lake. Both men and dogs got severely frost-bitten while bringing meat across the elevated and stormy region, where there is not a shrub for shelter. Until Christmas, I took my share of all these hardships, accompanying the Indians on their hunting excursions, and learned to kill my own reindeer. I also discovered another large arm of this inland sea, stretching half way between us and the Copper-mine.

"For that river I intend starting in March, to lay down the best route for the transport of our boats and baggage. My stay at the *house* is therefore very short—too short, indeed, for my literary employments; but, this first and hardest winter past, I shall probably have time enough.

"All our letters despond of our last summer's success, in consequence of the extreme inclemency of that season, and the Governor tells us to try the western coast again. Ha! ha! he forgot that all Great Bear Lake lies in the way, and does not clear out till August. My singular march from Boat Extreme to Cape Barrow put

the coping-stone to that job. Would that the eastern one were already commenced!

"We have a pretty long lease of night in this quarter, the sun being invisible at the house from the 30th of November till the 12th of January. Our winter fare consists of carriboo and musk-ox meat, whitefish, and an occasional huge trout. We were threatened with starvation at the outset; but, by dint of dispersing all hands, we got over that, and now enjoy abundance. Our buildings are small, as the climate and our means demanded: their position is on a strait opposite a large wooded island, three miles distant from Dease's River, the main feeder of the lake. I have not yet seen another spot where an establishment *could* have been erected.

"When fatigued with writing, chart-drawing, and astronomy, I have a resource which you would hardly have expected here in an excellent little library; which, besides scientific books, and a regiment of northern travels, contains Plutarch, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Shakspeare, Smollett, and dear Sir Walter. It is well that we came so provided; for our *friends* have not thought fit to send us any of the publications of the day.

"Mr. Dease and I live together on the happiest footing; his old wife, a little grandchild, and a

strapping wench, a daughter of his brother Charles, joining our mess. Dease is a worthy, indolent, illiterate soul, and moves just as I give the impulse.

"With respect to the dangers to be encountered, make yourself quite easy on my account. They are great, indeed, compared with those of *civilized* life, but really present nothing appalling to people who have traversed the interior of this wild country. Our plans, thanks to my own foresight, are all admirably laid, and can scarcely fail to maintain us in plenty, and to ensure success. I am no wild theorist, like Dr. King: all my proceedings are based on calculation and knowledge. On that foundation, and a humble reliance on a stronger Arm than man's, do I build my hopes.

"I believe I have now run over everything that would interest you from this remotest of white men's dwellings; let us, therefore, turn to friends at home.

"My last letter from our invaluable mother is of the 19th of February, 1837; at which time, in consequence, I suppose, of the Prince Rupert's cut-and-run from York Factory, she had not received a single letter from me dated in 1836: yet I wrote her from Red River once or twice during winter 1835-36. I wish there may be

fair play in all this. She seems resigned to poor aunt Jane's death; but draws a truly affecting picture of the dying sister's being unable to take a last leave of her blind brother. O God! is such the end of this miserable life? They whose hopes are not fixed upon a better are, indeed, worse than the beasts that perish. Our dear mother is apparently comfortable and happy, enjoying the respect of all who know her: she well merits our filial regard, which I hope will never fail her. Both she and our worthy friends at Bellevue are now descending into the vale of years. How I long to embrace them all once more—to behold again our loved mountain land! Why were we born poor and friendless, when many a dolt inherits a fair estate? When or where we shall meet again, God only knows! May he preserve and prosper you, wherever your lot may be cast!"

"Fort Confidence, April 20th, 1838.

"GENTLEMEN,

"We now resume our report on the affairs of the expedition, up to the present period.

"Our last fishery entirely failed about two months ago, but our hunters continue to furnish us with a sufficient supply of reindeer and musk-ox meat. No fewer than six or seven guns have recently burst in the chase, but happily only one

personal accident has ensued—the loss of a fore-finger by one of our young Chipewyans. Both Indians and whites, we are happy to say, enjoy uninterrupted health.

"The greatest degree of cold registered here this winter (60° below zero), occurred on the 11th of March; the *mean* temperature of the winter so far, is lower by several degrees, than any experienced by Franklin or Back, while the gales that here frequently accompany the *severest* cold, constitute a fearful distinction. The easterly winds which rush down from the mountains of the barren grounds, are the most intense; the westerly more commonly bring snow. Not the remotest symptom of spring has yet appeared, and the thermometer this morning stands at 26° below zero.

"Mr. Simpson has explored the barren grounds stretching from this place to the Coppermine River, in three different lines. His first journey performed with two men in the latter end of March, was solely for the purpose of discovery. On the second, he conducted our whole disposable force of men and dogs, laden with part of our provisions and baggage, for the ensuing summer, to a secure spot which he had marked in the first dwarf woods on the banks of a navigable stream, fifteen miles from its confluence with the Coppermine, and ninety-five from this place by

the route adopted. That route leads through the plains of Dease's river, to a point where the latter turns off to the north-west, in lat. 67° 22′ N., long. 117° 42′ W., far beyond where it was seen by Dr. Richardson. A height of land of six miles conducts to a chain of dismal lakes, thirty miles in length, winding in a south-easterly direction through a narrow cleft in a low range of primitive rocks, which produce not a tree or shrub, and seem unfrequented by any living creature. During the preceding day's journey, musk-oxen were numerous, and several were shot. Mr. Simpson left the baggage in charge of two trusty men, (provided with lodges &c.,) who are to remain at the station till we pass with the light boats in June. The remainder of our summer's provisions has been subsequently forwarded to the same place: and the boats will be transported up Dease's River, either on iron-shod sledges, when the snow melts off the ice, or by the first open water, according to the advance of the season. Our object is to reach the northern sea, not later than the 1st of July.

"Chief-Trader Macpherson has favoured us at our request with a perusal of the minutes of the council for 1837. With extreme surprise we read, that our careful and meritorious boat-builder and summer-master, John Ritch, has

been 'fined five pounds, for wanton destruction of the Company's property at Norway House last year.' The man solemnly declares himself unconscious of any such transgression. We have had good cause to notice his conduct during the trying emergencies of last season, in a very different manner; and in justice to him and to the expedition generally, we beg leave, with all due respect, to request a more satisfactory explanation of the grounds of this most unexpected charge, which has as it were accidentally come to our knowledge. Ritch has applied for his immediate discharge in consequence of this circumstance, but we are quite unable to dispense with his services, as, independently of the weakness of our numbers, we have no other person capable of the summer management of this place, on which you must be aware that the safety of the whole party essentially depends.

"The horrid affair of Cadien and his accomplices,* having been agitated among the Dogrib and Hare Indians, by whom we are surrounded here, we were under the necessity of applying to

* A murder of several Indian families. The principal, Cadien, (a half-breed servant of the Company,) was brought to Canada and tried for murder; of which, on the testimony of his accomplices in crime, he was found guilty. He was condemned to death; but his sentence was mitigated to transportation for life to New South Wales.

Mr. Macpherson for information respecting the steps which you have been pleased to take in that dark transaction. These have been communicated to the natives, who appear satisfied with our explanations; we are thus relieved from considerable anxiety which we felt on account of Ritch and his two fishermen, who will be left entirely at the mercy of these Indians during our absence on the coast.

"The remaining ten men attached to the expedition will form our crews; and if again protected by Providence, we may hope to return successful to winter-quarters before the 1st of October.

"We have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

"P. W. DEASE.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

"To the Governor, Chief Factors, and
Chief Traders of the Northern Department."

The following notices of the climate of this dreary arctic abode, were transmitted by my brother to the Meteorological Society of London.

"The following is an abstract of the atmospheric temperature (Fahr. scale) during the year 1838, at Fort Confidence, situated near the north-eastern extremity of Great Bear Lake, in lat. 66° 53′ 36″ N., long. 118° 48′ 45″ W. The standard thermometer employed, was made by

Dolland. It was placed five feet from the earth, with a northern aspect, and its indications were registered every three hours throughout the twenty-four. It may be proper to remark, that other thermometers showed from one to five degrees lower.

1838.	Extreme Temperature. Highest.	Lowest.	Monthly mean.
January	−0·5°	−49·0°	−29·90°
February	zero	−54·0	−22·70
March	+22·0	−60·0	−19·77
April	+42·0	−31·0	+ 7·11
May	+57·0	zero	+30·83
June	+75·5	+22·0	+46·70
July	+75·0	+32·0	+52·91
August	+65·5	+20·0	+45·21
September	+60·0	+21·0	+37·68
October	+41·0	− 7.0	+24·80
November	+20·0	−31·0	− 0·62
December	+19·0	−41·0	−11·12.

Mean temperature of the year +13·62°, or 18·38° of frost.

I had the curiosity, when the thermometer stood at −49°, to cast a pistol-bullet of quicksilver, which at ten paces passed through an inch plank, but flattened and broke against the wall three or four paces beyond it.

The mean temperature of the six coldest months of the winter 1837-38, November to April, was 14·07° below zero. For the convenience of comparison, I add the means of the corresponding six months, calculated from the journals of former arctic expeditions.

Winter Island, Sir Edward Parry	1821–2	— 9·87°
Igloolik, do.	1822–3	—17·68
Fort Franklin, Sir John Franklin	1825–6	— 6·78
Do. do.	1826–7	— 9·63
Fort Reliance, Sir George Back	1834–5	— 5·43

The interval at Fort Confidence, during which the thermometer never rose to the freezing point, was six months and a week, from the 17th of October 1837, to the 24th of April 1838. On the last-mentioned day, it reached the freezing point at *noon*; but only four days previously it had been as low as 26° below zero.

North and south winds are of rare occurrence here; easterly winds are the most prevalent, especially during the colder months, when they frequently blow with violence, even at the lowest temperatures; west, and even north-west winds commonly bring on snow, and less severe weather. This is at variance with what obtains over a considerable part of North America, but may be accounted for by the situation of the place on the verge of the last woods, close to the "barren lands."

This appellation is given to the north-east angle of the continent, because that extensive region is destitute of wood. The winds which sweep over it are, therefore, more intense than those which traverse the well-wooded country to the westward of Great Bear Lake. While engaged at various times during the winter of 1837-8 on hunt-

ing excursions with Indians to the eastward, and in surveying the different routes to the Coppermine River, I could not help remarking the increase in the severity of the cold and the frequency of the storms, when we got out into the hilly "barren lands."

The lakes and rivers are there much earlier frozen; and, as a further instance of the disparity of climate, the Coppermine River when we entered it with our boats last spring, in lat. 67° 07′ N., only broke up on the 21st of June, while Mackenzie's River, in the same parallel of latitude, is usually open by the close of May.

But little rain falls at Fort Confidence during the summer season; last winter, the average depth of snow on level ground, was about three feet. The largest quantity falls when the rigour of the cold begins to abate towards the spring.

A very common—I might say the ordinary—appearance of the *aurora borealis*, is an arch with little motion, passing through the zenith, and spanning the heavens from north-west to south-east. Now, since the variation of the compass at Fort Confidence is about four points easterly, (more accurately 48° 30′) it follows, that there is a disposition in this phenomenon here, *to arrange itself at right angles to the magnetic meridian.* In the depth of winter, those white clouds seen during the short and imperfect daylight in many in-

stances prove to be the aurora, which also not unfrequently appears through a hazy sky. Its displays are seldom very brilliant; and it hardly ever exhibits here those vivid prismatic tints which I have often admired between the latitudes of 50° and 60° north."

It may be interesting to housekeepers to have a record of the expenditure at this Arctic abode; I am able to give the following details from my brother's papers, in which each day's transactions are noted, with the most minute accuracy.

The officers' mess (women and servants included) consisted of nine persons, namely, Mr. Dease, his native wife, niece and child, my brother, two men acting as servants, and two Indian scullions.

The expenditure of provisions was as follows, from September to June:—548 fishes, 3493lbs. of fresh meat (including bone), 631 reindeer tongues, 225lbs. of fat, 33 geese and ducks.

And they enjoyed the following *luxuries*:—27 lbs. of tea, 6½lbs. of pepper and spices, 2lbs. of mustard, 2 gallons of rice, 6 gallons of raisins, 2 gallons of barley, 4 gallons of wine, 400lbs. of sugar, 150lbs. of butter, 540lbs. of flour, 2 hams.

The servants' mess consisted of twelve men, one woman, one child; and their consumption was as follows:—2329 fishes, 16,452lbs. of fresh meat (including bone), 1331lbs. of dried meat, 174lbs. of pemican, 130lbs. of fat, 62 tongues, 50 geese.

A comprehension of the principles on which a very large amount of solid food can be digested, and is necessary, in an Arctic climate, will alone enable one to understand how this large amount of *provand* was isposed of.*

It will be remarked that this liberal expenditure was justified by the ample means which the energy of the officers and their habitude to the country enabled them to provide.

* The following apt illustration from a recent popular scientific treatise explains the cause of hunger in cold weather:—

"In the summer season, the air is greatly rarified by the heat, and the amount of oxygen taken into the lungs is comparatively small—the carbonaceous matter of the blood, therefore, is slowly burned, and a return of hunger as slowly follows the gratification of the last appetite. In so far we resemble our fires—they burn slowly and feebly, because there is not a sufficiency of oxygen to encourage their blaze. In winter the air is more dense, especially in clear frosty weather, and every inspiration we make conveys into the lungs a maximum quantity of oxygen, which, acting there, and throughout the capillary system, carries off with remarkable rapidity whatever material it can combine with. The waste being rapid and abundant, it follows that the supply must be proportioned to it, and hence, in healthy and vigorous subjects, hunger is an almost constant claimant in cold weather. If this hunger be not satisfied, the body wastes with fearful rapidity. In fact, the analogy is sufficiently close for us to say, that the body, in respiring this dense pure air, consumes as much faster than in respiring a heated and expanded air, as does a fire on a clear frosty morning burn more brightly and rapidly than in the full sunshine of a hot summer's day.

CHAPTER XV.

Expedition of 1838 to the Eastward of the Coppermine River.—Its Comparative Failure.—My Brother's Opinions thereon, detailed in his Letters.—Opinions of the English Press, and the Public.

"Fort Confidence, Sept. 15, 1838.

"It now becomes our duty to report the incomplete success of the expedition to the eastward, this summer, in consequence of the extraordinary duration of the ice. Much, however, has been done to prepare the way for another attempt next year; and our hopes, instead of being depressed, are elevated by the knowledge so painfully acquired this season.

"On the 6th of June, our boats were conveyed on the ice to the mouth of Dease's River (then just open), the ascent of which was commenced on the following day. With some assistance from Indians, we reached the portage leading to the Dismal Lakes, (discovered by Mr. Simpson last winter,) and carried the boats across it without accident. The ice on these lakes was still perfectly solid; and we were provided

with iron-shod sledges for the passage. On these we fixed the boats; and the wind being fair, hoisted sail, which greatly aided the crews on the hauling ropes. In this manner, these frozen reservoirs, which are full thirty miles long, were passed in two days; and we reached our provision station at Kendall River on the 19th. There we had the satisfaction to find the two men (left there by Mr. Simpson in April) well; and their Hare Indian hunters successful in the chase.

"Two of these active fellows consented at once to accompany us along the coast, and proved not only good voyageurs; but, during our frequent detentions among the ice, killed so many reindeer as enabled us to save nearly half our summer's stock of provisions.

"Next day, (20th of June,) we proceeded to the Coppermine River, which was still fast. It, however, gave way on the 22nd, and we descended all its terrible rapids at full flood, while the ice was still driving.

"Below the Bloody Fall, the river did not clear till the 26th; and on the 1st of July, we pitched our tents at the ocean. Two or three Esquimaux families were seen there; but they took the alarm and fled over the ice towards some distant islands. Here, and on va-

rious parts of the coast, a fine collection of plants was made by Mr. Dease.

"We remained imprisoned in the mouth of the Coppermine River, awaiting the opening of the ice till the 17th of July. Our subsequent progress along the coast, was one incessant, we may say desperate struggle, with the same cold obdurate foe, in which the boats sustained serious damage, several planks being more than half cut through. At various points we saw *câches* of the Esquimaux placed upon the lofty rocks out of reach of beasts of prey; but we did not fall in with any of the owners, who seemed to have all gone inland to kill rein-deer, after their winter seal-hunt among the islands. Fragments of Dr. Richardson's mahogany boats were found widely scattered; and many articles left by his party at the Bloody Fall, were carefully preserved in the native keepings.

"On the 29th of July, we at length succeeded in doubling Cape Barrow. The northern part of Bathurst's Inlet was still covered with a solid sheet of ice; and, instead of being able to cross over direct to Point Turnagain, we were compelled to make a circuit of one hundred and forty miles by Arctic Sound and Barry's Islands.

"On the easternmost of that group, Mr. Simpson discovered, at the base of a crumbling cliff,

several pieces of pure copper ore; and the adjacent islands had also the appearance of being strongly impregnated with that metal.—A series of specimens of all the principal rocks along the coast, was preserved.

"In order to attain Cape Flinders, we had to perform a portage across an island, and several over the ice. On the 9th of August, we doubled that cape; and in a little bay three miles to the southward of Franklin's furthest encampment in 1821, our boats were finally arrested by the ice which encompassed them for twenty-two days. So different was the season of 1838, from that of 1821, when Franklin found a perfectly open sea there on the 16th of August. In June, the early part of July, and towards the middle of August, we had frequent storms, accompanied by snow and frost; but, during the greater part of July and the beginning of August calms prevailed, which, together with the severity of the preceding winter, we consider the cause of the tardy disruption of the ice this season.

"On the 20th of August we were obliged to relinquish all hopes of advancing further with the boats. That our efforts might not, however, prove wholly fruitless, Mr. Simpson offered to conduct an exploring party on foot for ten days. It was at the same time arranged

between us that, in the event of any favourable movement taking place on the ice, Mr. Dease should immediately advance with one boat. Signals were agreed upon to prevent our missing each other on the way; and should we unfortunately do so, the last day of August was fixed for the rendezvous of both parties at Boat Harbour. That unlucky spot is situated in latitude 68° 16′ 25″ N., lon. 109° 20′ 45″ W. Variation of the compass 46° East."

"Mr. Simpson's narrative of his journey and discoveries to the eastward is here annexed.

"On the 31st of August we cut our way out of our icy harbour—the grave of one year's hopes—and, having the benefit of fair winds, crossed Bathurst's Inlet by Wilmot's Islands, and safely re-entered the Coppermine River on the 3rd of September. The following day we proceeded to the Bloody Fall, and there secreted our superfluous provisions.

"The ascent of the Coppermine (hitherto deemed impracticable) to near the junction of Kendall River was accomplished on the fifth day. We deposited the boats in a woody bluff, where they can be conveniently repaired next spring. Then, taking our bundles on our backs,

we traversed the "barren grounds," and returned to winter quarters yesterday.

"We had the satisfaction to find everything in good order: the buildings rendered more comfortable, and some provisions collected. Our return so much earlier than we ourselves expected, on leaving Point Turnagain, has enabled us to commence the fall fisheries in good time: and, though our stock of ammunition and other necessaries for the Indians is reduced very low, want no longer stares us in the face, as it did for several months after our arrival here last year. We are most happy to add that the natives have experienced neither famine nor sickness this season: the only death within our knowledge being that of a blind old man.

"P. W. DEASE.
"THOMAS SIMPSON."

Mr. Simpson's narrative of his journey on foot to the eastward.

"On the 20th of August, the date appointed for the return of former expeditions from these desolate shores, I left our boats still hopelessly beset with ice, to perform a ten days' journey of discovery on foot to the eastward. My companions were five servants and two Indians. We carried a wooden framed canvas canoe;

and nearly the same other baggage as on the journey to Cape Barrow last year, with the addition of a tent for the nightly shelter of the whole party, on a coast almost destitute of fuel. Each man's load at starting weighed about half-a-hundredweight; and our daily progress averaged twenty geographical miles.

"About the middle of the first day's journey we passed the furthest point to which Sir John Franklin and his officers walked in 1821. Beyond that the coast preserved its N.N.E. trending to our encampment of the same night, situated on the pitch of a low cape, which I have named Cape Franklin.

"From west to north-east a new land or crowded chain of islands of great extent, in many places high and covered with snow, stretched along at the distance, apparently, of thirty miles; and led to the apprehension that we were entering a deep sound or inlet. The main-land now turned off to E.N.E., which continued to be nearly its general bearing for the three following days. It is flat in its outline, our path leading alternately over soft sand, sharp stones, and swampy ground. At the distance of from one to two miles, the coast is skirted by a range of low stony hills (then partially clothed with dull verdure) which send down to the sea

numberless brooks and small streams. None of the latter at that season reached above our waists, though the deep and rugged channels of many of them showed that in the spring they must be powerful torrents. Two leagues inland a hill (which I have called Mount George, after Governor Simpson) rises to the height of six hundred feet; and forms a conspicuous object for a day's journey on either side. The ice all along lay immovably aground upon the shallow beach, and extended in every direction as far as the eye could reach.

"The great northern land still stretched out before us, and kept alive doubts of our being engaged in exploring an immense bay, which even the increase in the tides, the quantity of sea-weed and shells, and the discovery of the remains of a large whale, and of a polar bear, could not altogether dispel. These doubts were converted into certainty as we drew near, on the fourth evening, an elevated cape, and saw land, apparently, all around. With feelings of bitter disappointment I ascended the height, from whose summit a splendid and most unlooked-for view burst suddenly upon me.

"The ocean, as if transformed by enchantment, rolled its free waves beneath, and beyond the reach of vision to the eastward. Islands of

various shape and size overspread its surface; and the northern land terminated in a bold and lofty cape, bearing E.N.E. at least forty miles distant, while the coast of the continent trended away to the south-east. I stood in fact on a remarkable headland at the eastern entrance of an ice obstructed strait.

"The extensive land to the northward I have called Victoria Land, in honour of our youthful sovereign, and its eastern termination Cape Pelly, after the Governor of The Honourable Company. To the promontory, whence I saw this welcome sight, I have attached the name of Cape Alexander, after an only brother, who would give his right hand to be the sharer of my journeys.

"The rise and fall of the tide there was about three feet; being the greatest observed by us in the Arctic seas. The coast here changes its character—the water becomes deep—the approach easy; and I have little doubt that the islands contain secure harbours for shipping.

"Next morning, at the distance of eight or nine miles, we crossed another high cape, composed of trap rocks. The travelling had become more and more toilsome; our road, now, passing over some miles of round loose stones, and then through wet mossy tracts, sown with large boulders, and tangled with dwarf willows. At our usual

camping hour we opened a large bay, studded with islands, which ran for five miles to the S.S.W., and then turned off in a bold sweep of rounded granite hills dipping to the sight in the E.S.E., at the distance of thirty miles. To walk round even the portion of the bay in view would have consumed three days—the time allotted for outgoing was already expired; and two or three of my men were severely lame from the fatigue of their bundles, the inequalities of the ground, and the constant immersion in icy cold water.

"I, besides, cherished hopes that, by making the best of our way back, we might, agreeably to my arrangement with Mr. Dease, meet him bringing on one of the boats, in which case, with an open sea before us, we could still have considerably extended our discoveries before the commencement of winter.

"I may here remark that we were singularly fortunate in the five days of our outward journey: the weather being so moderate and clear that I daily obtained astronomical observations; whereas, before our departure from the boats, and during our return to them, we had continual storms, with frost, snow, rain, and fogs.

"Close to our furthest encampment appeared the site of three Esquimaux tents of the preceding year, with a little stone fire-place apart; we

passed the remains of a larger camp, and several human skeletons, near Cape Franklin; but nowhere, throughout the journey, did we find recent traces of that few and scattered people.

"The morning of the 25th of August was devoted to the determination of our position, and the erection of a pillar of stones on the most elevated part of the point; after which I took possession of the country, with the usual ceremony, in the name of the Honourable Company, and for the Queen of Great Britain. In the pillar I deposited a brief sketch of our proceedings for the information of whoever might find it. Its situation is in lat. 68° 43′ 39″ N., long. (reduced from excellent lunars at the boats) 106° 3′ 0″ W. The magnetic variation being 60° 38′ 23″ E. The compass grew sluggish and uncertain in its movements as we advanced eastward, and frequently had to be shaken before it would traverse at all.

"Two miles to the southward of our encampment, a rapid river of some magnitude discharges itself into the bay, the shores of which seemed more broken and indented than those along which we had travelled.

"Independently of Victoria Land and numerous islands, I have had the satisfaction of tracing fully one hundred miles of coast; and of seeing

thirty miles further, making in all (after deducting Franklin's half day's journey already mentioned) about one hundred and twenty miles of continental discovery. This is, in itself, important; yet I value it chiefly for having disclosed an open sea to the eastward, and for suggesting a new route along the southern shores of 'Victoria Land,' by which that open sea may be attained, while the main-land (as was the case this season) is yet environed by an impenetrable barrier of ice. Whether the open sea, to the eastward, may lead to Ross' Pillar, or to the estuary of Back's Great Fish River, it is hard to conjecture, though the trending of the most distant land in view should rather seem to favour the latter conclusion.

"The same evening, on our return, we met the ice at Trap Cape driving rapidly to the eastward. As we proceeded the shores continued inaccessible; but open water was, now, everywhere visible in the offing. At dusk, on the 29th of August, (our tenth day,) we regained the boats, and found them still enclosed in the ice,—which the north-westerly gales seemed to have accumulated from far and near towards Point Turnagain.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

My brother's feelings and opinions, on return-

ing from this comparatively unsuccessful voyage, will be gleaned from the following extracts from his private letters.

TO GOVERNOR SIMPSON.

"September 18th, 1838.

"It will be needless to repeat the history of our journey, which the official dispatch contains. All that has been done is the fruit of my own personal exertions, achieved under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. I speak not of the difficulties of the way—these I have never much regarded; but of those of opinion with which I have had to struggle.

"My worthy senior, like Franklin and Back, was alarmed by the storms, the snow, and frost, in August, circumstances which always attend the disruption of any great body of ice; and insisted that the 20th of that month, the date fixed for the return of the Government expeditions, should also be that of ours. I contended that the clearest sea, and some moderate weather, will always be found in September. To the first of that month, our final departure was, in consequence, protracted, and the intervening period enabled me to discover one hundred and twenty miles of the continental coast, a new northern land, many islands, and an open sea to the east-

ward. Had I been alone in the command the latter circumstance, and the rapid disruption of the ice as we returned towards the boats, would have determined me to make a bold attempt to reach Ross' Pillar, or the Great Fish River *this* season: but being somewhat in the situation of Sinbad in the tale, I was not altogether free to follow my own designs. That they would have proved, by this date, successful, I have little doubt from the remarkable beauty of the weather which we still enjoy. *But my excellent senior is so much engrossed with family affairs, that he is disposed to risk nothing; and is, therefore, the last man in the world for a discoverer. I write not in anger but in sorrow; I esteem Mr. Dease for his upright private character, while I cannot help regarding him and his followers as a dead weight upon the expedition.*

"From Point Turnagain, by crossing Bathurst's Inlet direct to Cape Barrow, we reentered the Coppermine in four days as I had maintained. Dease would have the time at least trebled—talked much of the heavy gales in September, and of the risk of being taken in the new ice—two things quite incompatible with each other.

"At the Bloody Fall I had another contest against five weighty authorities. Franklin, Richardson, Dease, Mackay, and Sinclair con-

curred in pronouncing the further ascent of the river impracticable. I, however, carried my point against them all; and instead of abandoning our boats (and with them next year's voyage) to the Esquimaux, in five days we got them safely up to near the junction of Kendall River — the stream through which we entered the Coppermine in June. The opinions I expressed regarding the Coppermine, its depth of water, the rapids, the precipices, and the probable formation of a narrow beach at their base by the subsiding of the spring flood — in every particular proved correct: *showing that ten years' experience well applied may be more valuable than that of a life-time.**

"Since our return to this place, on the 14th inst., I have had the greatest trouble to keep the expedition together. Mr. Dease dwelt upon the probability of our recall—the insignificance of our remaining means—and the shattered condition of the boats; I argued that our honour was pledged in the cause—that we had provisions, if not goods, on hand—with nets to procure more; undertook, if necessary, to get our inland boat conveyed by one of the routes explored by myself, last winter, to the Coppermine; reminded my senior that the sea boats were

* "His years but young; yet his experience old!"

purposely left in a convenient situation for Ritch to repair them next spring; that we could get proper iron works for the purpose made at Fort Simpson; and recommended the instant dismissal of our expensive Chipewyan hunters.

"Sinclair and several others applied for their discharge, and Dease again expressed his desire of relinquishing the further prosecution of the enterprise. Upon which, to bring the matter to a point, I proposed to remain and follow it up with *one* boat's crew of volunteers.

"Had I acted like Parry, and others similarly circumstanced, I might have converted the erroneous notions of my senior to my own future aggrandisement; instead of which, sacrificing interest to honesty, I have been urging him on to his own advantage, reserving only the labour to myself. Would to God that I had again met with Esquimaux on my pedestrian journey, and could have obtained a *baidar* from them as last year, I should then either have reached the Great Fish River, or Ross' Pillar—or have never returned to tell the tale."

SAME DATE TO THE AUTHOR.

After narrating the advance voyage, he says,—"It was during ten days of that tedious inter-

val that I performed the pedestrian journey to the eastward, of which I have already made mention. Its results are, the tracing of one hundred miles of the continental coast,—the seeing thirty miles farther,—the discovery of an extensive '*terra incognita et nivea*' to the northward (distant about thirty miles from the main), which I had the honour of naming 'Victoria Land,'—of an archipelago of islands,—and, what I value more than all, of an open sea to the eastward. That open sea first greeted my astonished and delighted eyes on the fourth evening from the summit of a bold headland, which I have named Cape Alexander after an only brother, whom I love with an affection that the world, as it goes, knows little of.

"Our journey was altogether a laborious one, owing to the roughness of the ground, the icy cold streams and swamps in which we were constantly immersed, and the severity of the weather on our return. Two or three of my men became completely lame, and one is still laid up from the fatigue then endured.

"On the 29th at dusk, we rejoined Mr. Dease and our comrades at the boats. We had, on our return, found a great change in the state of the ice, which now only obstructed the shores, leaving everywhere a clear offing. Had I not been,

like Sinbad the sailor, hampered with an old man on my back, I should have immediately turned eastward with both boats; but the apprehensions of my useless senior and of the crews overpowered my single voice. * * *

"We have made collections of minerals and plants; and on Barry's Islands in Bathurst's Inlet, I had the good fortune to discover several pieces of virgin copper. I have three pet white wolves, which I found in a burrow at the height of land in June; then little brindled pups, but now fine stout fellows. They are remarkably docile, and as fawning as spaniels. I mean to train them to the sledge this winter; and (barring accidents) they shall have the honour of carrying me out at the close of the expedition. * * * Our remnant of trading articles for the Indians is very insignificant; but we have a snug little stock of provisions, and have now two or three good fall fisheries under way. Our little buildings, too, are much improved; and I hope to pass a quiet and comfortable winter, after the long and fatiguing journeys of the two last. *Luxuries* we have none, our only beverage being the Arctic tea-plant infused without sugar.

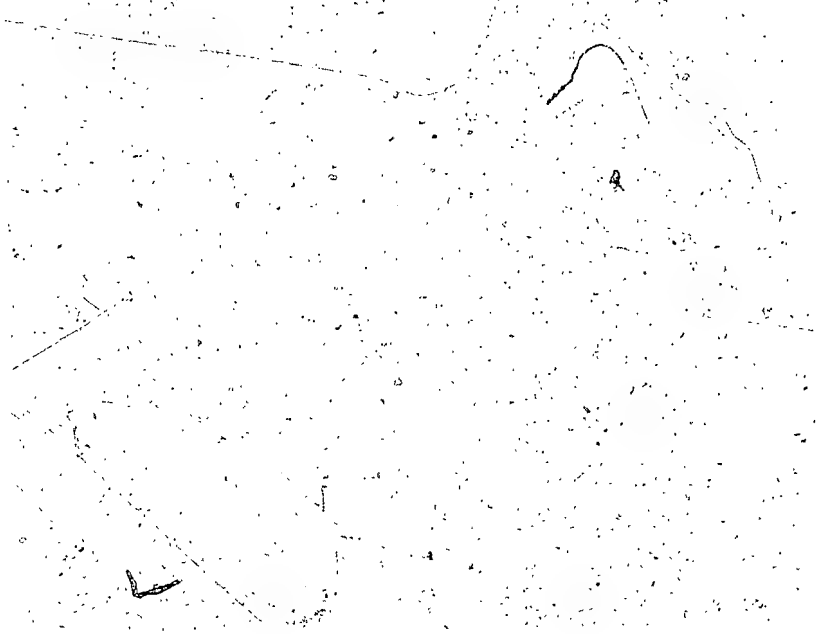
"For myself, I am still—and I glory in it—but a clerk in their Honours' service, though I have won a distinguished place among Northern

Discoverers. I hope it may be as you say, that a wider field will be opened to me; though I confess I apprehend some slippery trick on the part of the concern on which my discoveries throw lustre. They cannot, however, bar the foot of the throne against me. Back, it appears, got 'back' after doing nothing. My anticipations in reference to next summer are more sanguine than ever, from the knowledge so painfully acquired this season."

These feelings of disappointment were much soothed by the receipt, on the 27th of December, of communications from England, intimating the great interest excited by the publication of the dispatches announcing the successful issue of the expedition to Point Barrow. The commendations of the press were enthusiastic; and letters expressed in terms of high encomium from her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the first Lord of the Admiralty, were forwarded to him. Balm for a wounded spirit!

I may here mention that the narrative of the comparatively unsuccessful campaign of 1838, as given in this chapter, was, immediately on its arrival in London, published in the "Times," and extensively copied into periodicals in all parts of the world.

A high tribute was universally paid to the ardour and hardihood exhibited by my brother, the comparative failure justly ascribed to the unpropitious season, and a strong confidence expressed in the ultimate success of the expedition. The Geographical Society echoed public opinion by bestowing upon my brother the gold medal placed at its disposal by his Majesty William the Fourth; a convincing proof that it esteemed him the real director of the expedition.



CHAPTER XVI.

Winter 1838-39.—Preparations for a renewed Arctic Voyage.—Instructions to the Reserve.—Last Will.—Completely Successful Expedition of Summer 1839.—Return to Red River Colony.

I SHALL not enter into a lengthened detail of the monotonous but fearfully precarious second winter passed at the dreary and desolate Fort Confidence; a monotony varied solely by unremitting and untiring exertions to guard against starvation. Let the following brief dispatch tell (and it tells concisely and vividly) of this winter of care, anxiety, and privation.

"Fort Confidence, May 1st, 1839.

"GENTLEMEN,

"A winter of intense anxiety is nearly over without mortality. But for our aid many of the natives must have perished from hunger; for a murder among themselves, last fall, paralysed their energies, and, to add to this calamity, the rein-deer forsook their lands.

"We have saved them through great sacrifices,

and greater exertions. The environs of *our* winter quarters have not been strewed with Indian corpses; yet, by the practice of rigid frugality, we are still in a condition to prosecute our discoveries on the northern sea.

"Oolibuck, the Esquimaux interpreter, reached this place with the regular winter packet on the 13th ultimo. This valuable and unlooked for acquisition we owe to Chief Factors Christie and Charles, who engaged—to Chief Trader Todd and the other gentlemen along the route, who so promptly forwarded him to his destination.

"This winter has happily been less rigorous than the terrible one of 1837-8. In sheltered places indications of thaw already begin to appear at mid-day; and in another month we may expect to see the surface of the earth again.

"Our boats are repaired; our provisions are on the banks of the Coppermine; and as soon as that impetuous river bursts its icy fetters in June, the rest of the party will be there, with hopes nowise damped by the hardships and languor of a second Polar winter.

"We have the honour, &c.,

"P. W. Dease,

"Thomas Simpson."

"To the Governor, Chief Factors, and
Chief Traders of the Northern Department."

Previous to giving my brother's narrative of the successful voyage of 1839, I wish to place before the reader *verbatim* the "instructions" which he penned for the small detachment left behind at Fort Confidence—the *reserve*, I may call it, of the expedition.

The party started with the determination to succeed or perish; yet there is no symptom in these instructions of a rash and careless indifference—of a confiding in the chapter of accidents; on the contrary, they are as business-like, clear, and distinct, as those which the most martinet commissary could issue previous to a march "from Ealing to Acton."

There was, indeed, a singular combination in my brother's character, a combination to be found in very few characters (*The Duke*, a conspicuous example among the few), of the most daring courage, the most enthusiastic ardour, with a sedulous attention to minute details, and a most careful preparation of those "means and appliances" which a cautious judgment pointed out as likely to lead to success.

"INSTRUCTIONS TO JOHN RITCH.

"1. Your principal care during the summer, next to the safety of the establishment, will be to keep two fisheries a-going under the charge

of Felix and Morrison, who, with the aid of Indians, are to dry as many fish as possible.

"2. You will also trade their dried provisions from the Indians; but all who wish to withdraw to Forts Norman and Good Hope, should be encouraged to do so; a very few of the best hunters being sufficient for our purpose.

"3. About the middle of September a boat manned by servants and natives, will arrive from Fort Simpson with some ammunition, leather, &c., (as per list 1,) of which you will be very saving, in case of our having to pass part of another winter at Fort Confidence. The boat's crew to be placed as assistants to Felix and Morrison, till required to return to Mackenzie's River.

"4. We expect, God willing, to get back from the coast on or before the 10th of October. Should you not see or hear from us by that day, you will, on the following, despatch the Mackenzie River-boat with her crew, the families at the establishment, private property, some of the dogs, and everything not absolutely necessary for subsistence at the place. You will put the whole in charge of Felix, in whose stead you can retain young Boucher; and to strengthen the crew of the boat, you may add a couple of active Indians, not encumbered with families. This

boat you will provision with dried meat, (besides dried fish for the dogs,) to Fort Simpson, deducting from the requisite quantity two bags of Pemican, now at Fort Norman, which you will give Felix an order to receive. Should the fall be early, and the strait threaten to freeze up before the 10th of October, the boat must start earlier, as it is *essential* that she reach Fort Simpson by open water.

"5. The Pemican, &c., now here (as per list, No. 2) besides what you are to make, ammunition, nets, axes, sledges, some leather, snow shoes, and other articles pointed out to you must be left here in case of our having to perform a winter march to Fort Simpson, also the seven best trains of dogs (as per list, No. 3).

"6. Should we unfortunately not get back to winter quarters this season, you must maintain the establishment till the 10th of October, 1840, and on the first ice, 1839, send an express to Fort Simpson (with a copy of these instructions), craving Chief Trader Macpherson's assistance and advice.

"Fort Confidence, June 14th, 1839.

"List No. 1.—Articles expected from Mackenzie's River.

1 Keg Gunpowder.
1½ Bag Ball.
½ „ Salt.

2 Bales containing 30 large Morseskins.
2 pieces strouds, (coarse cloth,) 1 white, 1 blue.
2 dozen yew handle knives.
½ „ files.
1 Roll Twist Tobacco.
2 Cents. Gunflints.
6 Small axes.
6 Skeins Twine, or net thread.
Wood for 5 dozen sledges.
15 pairs snow-shoes, and 5 axe helves.

"List No. 2.—Dried Provisions remaining at Fort Confidence.

3 Bags Pemican.
3 „ Grease.
3 „ Flour.

"Also more than sufficient pounded meat to make, with two of the bags of Grease, five more of Pemican—in all, twelve pieces, upon which we depend on our return from the coast.

"List No. 3.—Dogs to be kept.

1st sledge—Brandy, Shanass, Toby.
2nd do. —Sansbec, Captain, Castor.
3rd do. —Cervolant, Lion, Boatswain.
4th do. —Negre, Sauvage, Bob.
5th do. —Carlo, Whiskey, Wabistan.
6th do. —John Mackay's own train.
7th do. —Laurent's own two, and Teyma.
Felix's Tarrioke, and the Wolf to go out by the first boat."

Although my brother considerately represented to me and his other relatives, that "the service is by no means the desperate one it is represented

to be," he himself was well aware of its extreme risk, and previous to his departure executed his Last Will (which has been acted on). It is expressed as follows:—

"In the event of my death on the present Arctic expedition, my worldly means, to the best of my knowledge, will stand as follows:—Five hundred pounds sterling in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company: my revisionary share as a chief trader in that concern, worth, at the utmost, fifteen hundred pounds sterling: whatever monies the British Government may award me for the acknowledged discovery in the year 1837, of the long-sought North-west passage, or may arise from the publication of my maps and journal: and my half-share of a house and garden in the town of Dingwall, in the highlands of Scotland. Of these effects I will and bequeath the sum of one thousand pounds sterling, free of legacy duty and all other charges, to my mother, Mrs. Mary Simpson of Dingwall, aforesaid. To my uncle, Duncan Simpson, Esq., of Bellevue, near Beauly, in the same county of Ross, and to his wife Mary jointly, or to the survivor of them, I bequeath the sum of one hundred pounds sterling: and to Mrs. Margaret Bain * of Dingwall aforesaid, twenty

* His old nurse.

pounds sterling, in like manner free from legacy duty and all other charges. To my only brother, Alexander Simpson, now, or lately, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and to his lawful heirs I will and bequeath the residue of my property as above stated; and all that may accrue to me from any other source whatever, saving and excepting my clothing, books, arms, or other moveables, not specified, at Great Bear Lake and Red River, to the value of one hundred pounds sterling or thereby, which I appropriate to satisfy any claims there may be against me at the said colony of Red River. Should my mother, uncle and aunt, or Mrs. Margaret Bain, aforesaid, die before me, then, and in that case, it is my will that the sums bequeathed to them revert to my brother Alexander, and to his lawful heirs. I further constitute and appoint my said brother, Alexander Simpson, and my friend Alexander Christie, Esq., at present Governor of Red River colony, the executors of this my last Will and Testament.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal in duplicate, at Fort Confidence, Great Bear Lake, this eleventh day of June one thousand eight hundred and thirty nine.

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

L.S.

The following despatch narrates the completely successful result of the summer's proceedings:—

"Fort Simpson, October 16, 1839.

"HONORABLE SIRS,

"We have the honour to report the completion of all the primary objects of the expedition—the entire fulfilment of Governor Simpson's original instructions, under which it has been our good fortune to act, and something more, though, as we plainly told your Honours last winter, it was quite out of the question to think of reaching the straits of the Fury and Hecla from the Coppermine River.

"On the 22nd of June we descended that impetuous stream to the Bloody Fall, where we remained until the 28th. This interval was employed by Mr. Simpson in exploring Richardson's River, discovered in 1838, which discharges itself, as we then supposed, into the bottom of Back's Inlet, in lat. 67° 53′ 57″ N., long. 115° 56′ W. A party of about thirty Esquimaux were encamped there, all of whom fled precipitately to the hills, except one family, whose tent was placed on an island in the stream. With these last a communication was opened, through our interpreter, Oolibuck; but the circle of their little lives being confined to Behrens'

Isles and the borders of Richardson's River, they had no information to impart of any value.

"On the 3rd of July, the first slight opening occurred in the sea ice, of which we took instant advantage; but our first week's journey did not exceed twenty miles, and it was the 18th, after sad work, before we could attain Cape Barrow. From its rocky heights we beheld with equal surprise and delight, the wide extent of Coronation Gulf partially open, whereas, long after the same date in 1838, the whole party might have crossed it on foot. At midnight on the 20th, we landed at Cape Franklin, just one month earlier than Mr. Simpson's arrival there, on his pedestrian journey of the year before. A violent easterly gale arrested our progress for the next four days, and on the 27th and 28th, we encountered great peril in doubling Cape Alexander, amidst very heavy driving ice.

"From Cape Alexander, situate in lat. 68° 56′ N., long. 106° 40′ W., to another remarkable point in lat. 68° 33′ N., long. 98° 10′ W., the Arctic coast may be comprised in one spacious bay, stretching as far south as lat. 67° 40′, before it turns off abruptly northward, to the last mentioned position. This vast sweep, of which but an inconsiderable portion was seen by Mr. Simpson last year, is indented by an endless suc-

cession of minor bays separated from one another by long narrow projecting points of land, enclosing an incalculable number of islands.

"From this description, it will be evident that our route was an extremely intricate one, and the duties of the survey most harassing; but, whilst perplexed beyond measure in finding our way through these labyrinths, we derived great advantage from the protection afforded by the islands from the crushing force of the seaward ice, and the weather was generally clear. In fact, the most serious detention caused by ice on this part of the voyage, was from the 1st to the 5th of August, on a point that jutted out beyond the insular chain. White Bear Point, as it was called, lies in lat. 68° 7′ 85″ N., long. 104° 36′ 45″ W., variation 54° 45′ E. These bays and masses of islands present a distinct succession of geological features, which can be best illustrated by our series of specimens of the rocks that compose this wild and barren coast. Vestiges of Esquimaux, mostly old, were met with wherever we landed. They appear to subsist in single families, or very small parties, and to travel inland for the deer hunt in the month of June, not returning to their sealing islands till the ice sets fast in October. A river twice the size of the Coppermine, which falls into the sea

in lat. 68° 2′ N., long. 104° 15′ W., is much resorted to by reindeer and musk oxen, in the summer season.

"Finding the coast as already remarked, trending northerly from the bottom of the great bay, we expected nothing less than to be carried round Cape Felix of Captain James Ross, contrary to the conjecture hazarded by Mr. Simpson, in his narrative of last year's journey. On the evening of the 10th of August, however, (at the last point already given,) we suddenly opened a strait running in to the soutward of east, where the rapid rush of the tide scarcely left a doubt of the existence of an open sea leading to the mouth of Back's Great Fish River. This strait is ten miles wide at either extremity, but contracts to three in the centre. Even the narrow channel is much encroached upon by high shingle islands, but there is deep water in the middle throughout.

"The 12th of August was signalised by the most terrific thunder-storm we have ever witnessed in these regions. Next day it blew roughly from the westward, with a very dense cold fog, but we ran rapidly south-east, passed Point Richardson and Point Ogle of Sir George Back, and continued on till the darkness of night and the increasing gale drove us ashore beyond Point Pechéll. The storm shifted to the north-east,

and lasted till the 16th, when we directed our course, with flags flying, to the Montreal Island. On its northern side our people, guided by Mackay, soon found a deposit made among the rocks by some of Sir George Back's party, but, as Mackay seemed to think, without that officer's knowledge. It contained two bags of pemican, and a quantity of cocoa and chocolate, all perfectly rotten, besides an old tin vasculum, and two or three other trivial articles, of which we took possession as memorials of our having breakfasted on the identical spot where the tent of our gallant, though less successful, precursor stood on his return from Point Ogle to the Great Fish River, that very day five years before.

"The arduous duty we had, in 1836, undertaken to perform, was thus fully accomplished; and the length and difficulty of the route back to the Coppermine would have amply justified our immediate return. We had all suffered more or less from the want of fuel, and the deprivation of warm food; and the prospects grew more cheerless as the cold weather stole on apace; but having already ascertained the separation of Boothia from the American continent, on the western side of the Great Fish River, we determined not to desist till we had settled its

relation thereto on the eastern side also. A fog which had come on dispersed towards evening, and unfolded a full view of the picturesque shores of the estuary. Far to the southward, Victoria Headland stood forth so clearly defined, that we instantly recognised it by Sir George Back's exquisite drawing. Cape Beaufort we almost seemed to touch; and with the telescope we were able to discern a continuous line of high land as far round as north-east, about two points more northerly than Cape Hay, the extreme eastern point seen by Sir George Back.

"The traverse to the furthest visible land occupied six hours' unremitting labour at the oar, and the sun was rising on the 17th when we scaled the bluff and singularly shaped Rocky Cape, to which our course had been directed. It stands in latitude 68° 3′ 56″ N., longitude 94° 35′ W. The azimuth compass, by Jones, settled exactly in the true meridian, and agreed with two others, by the same maker, placed on the ground. From our proximity to the magnetic pole, the compass had latterly been of little or no use; but this was of the less consequence, as the astronomical observations were very frequent. The dip of the needle, which at Thunder Cove (12th of August) was 89° 29′ 35″, had here decreased to 89° 16′ 40″ N. This bold promon-

tory, where we lay wind-bound till the 19th, was named Cape Britannia, in remembrance of our glorious country. On the beetling rock that sheltered our encampment from the sea, and forms the most conspicuous object on all this part of the coast, we erected a conical pile of ponderous stones, fourteen feet high, that, if not pulled down by the natives, may defy the rage of a thousand storms. In it was placed a sealed bottle, containing a sketch of our proceedings, and possession was taken of our extensive discoveries in the name of Victoria I., amidst the firing of guns and the enthusiastic cheers of the whole party.

"On the 19th the gale shifted from north-east to east-south-east, and after crossing a fine bay, due east, with no small toil and danger, the coast bent away north-east, which enabled us to effect a run of forty miles. Next day the wind resumed its former direction, and after pulling against it all the morning among the shoals and breakers, and gaining only three miles, we were obliged to take refuge in the mouth of a small river.

"From a limestone ridge, about a league inland, we obtained a view of some very remote blue land in the north-east quarter, in all probability one of the southern promontories of

Boothia. Two considerable islands lay far in the offing, and others, high and distant, stretched from east to east-north-east.

"Our view of the low main shore was confined to five miles in an easterly direction, after which it appeared to turn off greatly to the right. We could, therefore, scarcely doubt our having arrived at that large gulf uniformly described by the Esquimaux as containing many islands, and with numerous indentations stretching down to the southward, till it approaches within forty miles of Repulse and Wager Bays. The exploration of such a gulf, which was the main object of the Terror's ill-starred voyage, would necessarily demand the whole time and energies of another expedition, having a starting or retreating point much nearer to the scene of operations than Great Bear Lake; and it was quite evident to us that any further foolhardy perseverance could only lead to the loss of the great object already attained, together with that of the whole party.

"We must here be allowed to express our admiration of Sir John Ross's extraordinary escape from this neighbourhood, after the protracted endurance of hardships, unparalleled in arctic story.

"The mouth of the stream which bounded

the last career of our admirable little boats, and received their name, lies in lat. 68° 28′ 27″ N., long. 97° 3′ W., variation of the compass 16° 20′ W. The strong wind that had forbidden our advance gave wings to our retreat. The same night, the 20th of August, we landed once more at Cape Britannia, and next morning we crossed the inlet direct to Point Pechell, with a heavy sea. On the 22nd we explored a long narrow bay on the west side of Point Ogle, which extends to the sixty-eighth parallel of latitude. The north wind blew roughly, with sharp frost; and next day we got no further than Point Richardson. Thence we crossed over on the 24th to what had, from the continent, appeared like two islands, but which we rightly conjectured to form part of the southern shore of Boothia, or, to speak with greater precision, of that land on which stands Cape Felix of Captain James Ross. This shore we had the satisfaction of tracing for about sixty miles, till it turned up to the north, in lat. 68° 41′ 16″ N., long. 98° 22′ W., only fifty-seven miles from Ross's Pillar. The dip of the needle was 89° 28′ 45″ N., the magnetic pole bearing north-north-east, distant ninety miles. The variation, as shown by both the azimuth compass and the horizontal bar needle, was 45° east. The objects seen on this

coast are easily enumerated—a low uninteresting limestone tract, abounding nevertheless in reindeer, musk oxen, and old native encampments. To the westward a good deal of ice appeared, and vast numbers of snow-geese passed high overhead in long triangular flights, bound for milder skies.

"Whilst engaged in taking observations, our men constructed another durable memorial of our discoveries, which was saluted in the usual manner. Then recrossing the strait on the 25th we resumed for some time our outward route, only keeping more along the seaward verge of the islands so as to shape a straighter course.

"The weather, from being threatening and unsettled, soon became unequivocally severe. On the 29th of August a snow storm began that lasted for seven days, during four days of which we were fixed to a single spot by the violence of the north-west gales, while the frost was so keen that the pools among the rocks on which we lay became solid enough to bear up a man. A more moderate interval succeeded this fierce outbreak. Quitting the continent again, at the large river already mentioned, we struck north-north-west for an extensive island twenty-two miles off, which we coasted north-west for twenty miles; and shortly before sunset on the

6th of September stood out thence due north for the nearest point of Victoria Land, which proved equally distant. We have never seen anything more brilliant than the phosphoric gleaming of the waves when darkness set in. The boats seemed to cleave a flood of molten silver, and the spray, dashed from their bows before the fresh breeze, fell back like showers of diamonds into the deep. It was a cold night, and when we at last made the land, cliffs, faced with eternal ice, obliged us to run on for a couple of leagues before we could take the shore with safety. The coast of Victoria Land, which we explored for upwards of one hundred and fifty miles, is incomparably the boldest we have met with in these seas. Often near the shore no bottom could be found with thirty-five fathoms of line, and the cerulean blue colour of the water everywhere indicated a profound depth. There are several noble bays, the largest of which, north-west of Cape Alexander, is twenty miles wide and equally deep, backed by snow-clad mountains. It attains to 69° 40′ north, the highest latitude of this voyage.

"At length we reached the extreme point seen by Mr. Simpson from Cape Franklin in 1838, where the coast of this large country begins again to trend northward of west, Cape

Barrow lying by computation south-south-west, distant fifty miles. On the 10th September we crossed this magnificent strait with a strong east-south-east or side wind and a rough sea in which our gallant boats, old and worn out as they were, acquitted themselves beyond our most sanguine hopes. Our return from Cape Barrow was miserably retarded by furious north-west winds and severe stress of weather. Winter permanently set in on the 15th September, and next day to the undisguised joy of the whole party, we re-entered the Coppermine River, after by far the longest voyage ever performed in boats on the Polar Sea.

"Leaving one of our little craft, together with the remains of the pemican (which through age and long exposure was become quite mouldy), and various other articles, as a prize to the first Esquimaux who may visit the Bloody Fall, we ascended the river with our double crew in four days, abandoned our tents, and everything but absolute necessaries, crossed the barren grounds up to the knees in snow, having unluckily left our snow-shoes on the coast, and safely reached Fort Confidence at dusk on the 24th. The fisheries had failed sooner than ever, and we had good reason to congratulate ourselves on not being doomed to pass a third winter within the Arctic Circle.

"After settling with the Indians, liberally rewarding the most deserving, and supplying all with ammunition gratuitously, we took our departure on the evening of the 26th in two inland batteaux: one belonged to the expedition, the other came from Fort Simpson sixteen days before our arrival.

"Our passage of Great Bear Lake was most boisterous and inclement; in crossing the body of the lake and other considerable traverses our boats, with everything in them, and even the very clothes on our backs, became converted into shapeless masses and concretions of ice. It was high time for us to escape from Great Bear Lake, for the temperature, which was at 4° below zero when we landed at the head of the river on the evening of the 4th of October, fell 10° lower in the course of the night, and next day we descended the rapid stream in the very midst of the driving ice. On entering the Mackenzie we experienced a temporary mitigation of this excessive cold; but we should most assuredly have stuck fast above Fort Norman had not the northern gales again arose in their strength, and while they shattered and dispersed the rapidly forming ice, enabled us to stand the current under close reefed sails. At noon, on the 14th October, after forcing our way with no small risk through

the torrent of ice forced out by the rivers of the mountains, we reached this place, and were cordially welcomed by our valuable friend Chief Trader Macpherson, who had for some time given up all hopes of our arrival.

"Most of our people are still afflicted with acute pains and swellings in the limbs, caused by cold and exposure, and we are assured by Mr. Macpherson that he has never known or heard of so early or rigorous a commencement of winter in Mackenzie's River; on the other hand, so fine a spring as that of 1839 seldom visits these frozen regions, and to this favouring circumstance, under Providence, ought our signal success to be partly ascribed.

"*October 30th.*—The state of the ice at length enables us to despatch couriers to Slave Lake. In the mean time Governor Simpson's highly valued letter of the 17th of June, which unfortunately missed us in our way hither, has cast up overland. We rejoice in having anticipated the Russian expedition, and secured to our country and the Company the indisputable honour of discovering the north-west passage, which has been an object of search to all maritime nations for three centuries. When our expedition was planned at Norway House, in 1836, it was confidently expected that Sir George Back would

have achieved the survey of the Gulf of Boothia with the Terror's boats, and that our meeting at the mouth of the Great Fish River would have left no blank in the geography of Northern America. That officer's failure, the exhaustion of our men and means, and the necessity of a new wintering ground, render a fresh expedition indispensable for the examination of the Gulf of Boothia, the circuit of which to the Strait of the Fury and Hecla, according to the Esquimaux accounts, cannot be less than four hundred or five hundred miles. It only remains for us to recommend to your approbation the plan proposed by Mr. Simpson to perfect this interesting service, which, as he has no wish to avail himself of the leave of absence granted, he is prepared to follow up whenever the limited means required are placed at his disposal.

"We have the honour to be your most obedient, humble servants,

"PETER W. DEASE.
"THOMAS SIMPSON."

"To the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, London."

From the 14th of October to the 2nd of December, my brother remained at Fort Simp-

son—a period not of indolence, for during it he completed his Narrative of the Expedition; and had much occupation with the calculations, and in drawing up the charts of the eastern discoveries.

On the last named day he took his departure from Fort Simpson. The incidents of the journey to Red River I shall not narrate in detail. The distance is about nineteen statute hundred miles, and it was performed in sixty-one days, all stoppages included! Even this excessive toil was insufficient to exhaust the energies of such tried travellers as were himself and Mackay, and Sinclair, the picked men of the party, who followed him with unshrinking confidence through all dangers and privations. After a day's march of seventy miles, they revelled on the morrow in the delights of *a ball and tea supper*.

On the 2nd of February 1840, my brother returned in safety to his point of departure, Red River colony, after an absence of three years and two months, marked by toils, perils, and privations, such as have seldom been endured.

CHAPTER XVII.

Schemes for a renewed Expedition.—Their Reception by Governor Simpson; by the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company.

BEFORE entering upon the wide field of discovery to the eastward of the Coppermine River, my brother foresaw, that the fulfilment of his original plan would not complete the exploration of the Arctic Coast of America; that under any circumstances, there was work there for two summers unless Sir George Back succeeded in his intended exploration from Wager River.

The season of 1837 had been uncommonly inclement in the *southern* regions of Hudson's Bay; and conceiving from this, that it was impossible for the expedition to have accomplished its western object that summer, Governor Simpson gave authority to the officers to take a second year for that portion, and then devote a third summer to the eastern line of coast.

This additional authority was eagerly embraced by my brother for the eastern line, now that the western line was complete. He accepts it in these words,—"Now that we are fairly under way, I should consider it shameful to grow wearied like our predecessors with one or even two campaigns.

"I rejoice in the full power you have given us to prolong our sojourn here, as I see to the eastward a probable field for the labours of two summers.

"Mr. Dease acceded to my proposal to that effect. We have taken, accordingly, measures to obtain the supplies absolutely required for subsistence from Athabasca and Mackenzie River; and have written to York Factory for the Nautical Almanac for 1839, which, as I informed you from Norway House, and again from Red River, cannot be dispensed with. My ideas are as follows:—

"This ensuing summer (1838) we expect to fulfil our original instructions, that is, to attain the Strait of James Ross, to reach the mouth of the Great Fish River, and, if possible, to determine the continuity or separation of Boothia Felix and the continent.

"Should they prove united either to the west or east of Great Fish River, then the 'North-

west passage' will still remain an undecided question; the whole coast from Ross's Magnetic Pole northward, to Cape Walker of Parry, being unexplored.

"*That is* what I propose in 1839, — an enterprise surpassing anything that has been attempted in boats. Yet, if we can bring our little craft to a place of safety this fall, are not disappointed in provisions, and are favoured by Providence with a good season, I have strong hopes of a crowning result.

"Even should we have to winter with the Esquimaux in Ross's Strait, do not give us up for lost, as we have our eyes upon every contingency."

After his discovery of a clear sea to the eastward of Cape Alexander in 1838, on which, as we have seen, he was prevented from embarking that season by the inertness of his brother officer, he thus details his schemes for future discovery:

"Fully aware of the imprudence of making statements in public documents which unforeseen circumstances may overthrow, I have not in our reply to their Honours' dispatch proposed any specific plan for completing the surveys which our ensuing voyage may leave unfinished. Indeed, it is impossible at present to say what those unfinished parts may be, or how much;

for, though in our letter we state that we only anticipate reaching the Great Fish River — our original limit—yet if we can by any means penetrate further, you may rely upon it that we will do so.

"I rejoice that you have resolved at all events upon pushing these discoveries to Hudson's Bay; and I gladly devote life and limb to their completion. I should greatly prefer finishing the whole before going home to publish any part of our travels.

"The present expedition must undoubtedly terminate with next voyage; for our men, boats, goods, provisions, all are worn out and exhausted.

"My esteemed friend, Mr. Dease, complains frequently of his eyesight, which, with family cares, was, I believe, the cause of his anxiety to conclude matters last fall. Should another expedition then be necessary, I would readily undertake to conduct it into the north next year.

"One vital point in such a service, is to have as few mouths to feed as possible. A post-master and fisherman for the establishment, eight servants and myself for the sea, would be sufficient; say eleven persons in all, which is only half the number of souls appertaining to Fort Confidence.

"All the preparations could be easily arranged

on my journey out next winter. At Fort Chipewyan, a quantity of pemican and leather would have to be provided, and two small sea-boats built in spring 1840. At Norway House, the requisite supply of flour, grease, ammunition, and other goods might be procured; and there would be no want of volunteers for a service so popular. One boat would convey ourselves and all our wants in company with the Portage-la-loche Brigade to Fort Chipewyan, where, assuming the two sea-boats, and stock of pemican, &c., we could reach either Fort Reliance or this place in good time in September 1840; and my first act would be to establish the fall fishery.

"This is the simplest, cheapest, and most expeditious plan of operations that I can devise; and I hope that you will have no objections to entrust me with a discretionary power to make the necessary arrangements, if the result of our approaching voyage shall be found to justify them, so that no time may be lost.

"If Boothia Felix turn out an island, and that we are unable to get beyond it this year, a very likely way of reaching the Straits of the Fury and Hecla would be to pass the first winter at Fort Reliance; and while the exploring party is engaged the following summer on the coast, the post-master and fisherman, with the aid of In-

dians, to come round to this place, (Fort Confidence,) which, from its proximity to the sea, (eight days on foot,) we might attain when the season would be too far advanced to attempt the ascent of Great Fish River.

"Neither do I despair of getting to Cape Walker of Parry in some way or other, should Boothia prove a peninsula. The distance is great; but I would not scruple to undertake it with one boat transported as far as possible over the ice from the mouth of the Coppermine, as soon as that river breaks up, in the latter end of June; the other boat following, with the bulk of the provisions, as the navigation opened. In short, I see no difficulty which does not also present some means for overcoming itself. These are, of course, mere conjectures *now*; but whatever wintering ground may be found most eligible, the party and means should be the same.

"The expense of finishing what will remain undetermined by the present expedition may, I think, be safely assumed at half *its* cost. No one can have more reason than myself to wish that this year may witness the conclusion of our labours in this dreary region; but if, as I have supposed in this letter, another expedition be required, in consequence of Captain Back's failure to the eastward, I again offer myself unre-

servedly to command it on the scale which I have proposed."

To this chivalrous proposal, no direct answer was made; the following cold "Red Tape" paragraph was all that reached my brother, when he was returning flushed with success in having achieved more than his own plan, and the instructions founded on it, pointed out.

"We observe that, whether successful or otherwise, in accomplishing the survey to Great Fish River, you are not prepared to continue the operations of the expedition next year, which is to be regretted, as we were in hopes that, after that section of the coast had been surveyed, you would have been in a condition to push your discoveries to the Straits of the Fury and Hecla. That, however, we find cannot be done under any circumstances; you may therefore repair to the depôt, and take a winter's leave of absence if agreeable to you, by way of recruiting after your severe and hazardous labours; during which I have no doubt plans will be matured for completing this very difficult and interesting service, which cannot be allowed to fall to the ground while a shadow of hope remains that there is a possibility of accomplishing it."*

* The same dispatch conveyed a hope that the expedition had returned from the coast by the Great Fish River.

How this cold evasion was viewed by my brother's high spirit, may be judged from his reply.

"Fort Simpson, October 25, 1839.

"So far from wishing to avail myself of the leave of absence, which you have so kindly offered unasked, it gives me great uneasiness that a whole year will probably elapse before the final expedition can be set on foot that is destined to accomplish this *North-east*, as my expedition to Point Barrow in 1837 achieved the *North-west* Passage.

"Probably you considered the discretion I soli-

That the writer of the dispatch, (and recipient of honors in virtue of having concerted the plans of the expedition,) knew very little of the matter, is well shown by the reply made to it:—

"With this early winter, had we resolved on ascending the Great Fish River, we should in all probability have been set fast hundreds of miles from Fort Reliance; and the bones of some of the party would have been now bleaching on the barren grounds. But, supposing that the fall had been fine, and that we had, like Back, got within a couple of days' journey of Fort Reliance, and crossed the interior mountains on foot,—what should we have found at Fort Reliance? A parcel of blackened ruins, without provisions, resources, or craft, to convey us over the vast length and across the interminable arms of Great Slave Lake, so that our fate there would have been much the same as in the Gulf of Boothia. By going up the Great Fish River, under any circumstances, our most valuable magnetical observations would have been

cited in my letter of the 31st of January too great, at least I infer so from your silence on that head. * * * *

"As for what remains to be done, I am so far from seeking to convert it to my future advantage, that, with my life, I hereby place at your disposal, towards meeting the expenses of the new expedition, should there be any obstacle, the sum of five hundred pounds, being every shilling I am worth at this moment, besides all the future proceeds of my double commission, till the whole charge of the said expedition shall be redeemed.

"Fame I will have, but it must be *alone*. My worthy colleague on the late expedition frankly acknowledges his having been a perfect supernumerary; and to the extravagant and profligate habits of half-breed families I have an insuperable aversion.

"The coast, from the Strait of the Fury and Hecla to York Factory, is still more dangerous for boats than that which we have tried so well this season; but my whole soul is set upon it,

wanting; and the extensive southern coasts of Boothia and Victoria Land would have remained unexplored; for it was only our return to the Coppermine that enabled us to accomplish the double survey. After this explanation, I trust that the subject will be fully understood, and the soundness and humanity of our judgment felt."

and I feel an irresistible presentiment that I am destined to bear the Honourable Company's flag fairly through and out of the Polar Sea."

Finding that his proffers were at least coldly received by his relative, whose jealousy of his rising name was now but ill disguised, my brother addressed to the Directors of the Company a direct dispatch on the same subject, conveying his plan of an expedition to complete the survey of the Gulf of Boothia; and a bold, daring, but perfectly feasible plan it is!

"Fort Simpson, October 18th, 1839.

"HONOURABLE SIRS,

"MY much-esteemed friend, Chief Factor Dease, has made over to me his claim to the command of another expedition, which, from the tenor of your Honours' dispatches, you will doubtless determine on setting on foot for exploring the Gulf of Boothia, the only section of the Arctic coast of America now unknown; I am therefore emboldened to lay before your Honours a plan for the accomplishment of this important undertaking, which I humbly think can scarcely fail of success.

"The position of the Great Fish River, falling into the sea in the vicinity of the unexplored coast, clearly points it out as the best

egress to the scene of operations. True, it possesses no advantages over the Coppermine as a channel of *retreat*: on the contrary, the difficulties would, in such an early winter as the present, be greatly aggravated; but, as a starting point, it offers the immense superiority of bringing the party upon the field one month earlier. As compared with Churchill, its superiority in respect to *time* is still greater; there remains, therefore, not the shadow of a doubt that Fort Reliance ought to be the wintering ground of the proposed expedition.

"The party should consist of thirteen men, including the Esquimaux interpreter, and a person qualified to act in the double capacity of boat-builder and summer-master; the latter with two fishermen to remain at the establishment. The other ten men to accompany myself to the sea; and, with two Indians, form the crews of two small boats, to be built in the course of the winter at Artillery Lake. I have personally bespoke the services 'if required' of Mackay and Sinclair, the only steersmen in the country who are acquainted with the long and dangerous navigation of the Great Fish River. The requisite supply of provisions can be procured at Athabasca, and the trading goods brought from the depôt next spring, to be in readiness for starting

either in 1840 or 1841, as you may decide. Should it be my good fortune to obtain your Honours' confidence and sanction, there are two points upon which I would require discretionary power. The first, to employ two seasons on the coast, if *necessary*; the second, to be permitted either to fall back on the Great Fish River, or to push through the Straits of the Fury and Hecla, and make my way to York Factory. The latter course, if practicable, would be by far the most accordant with my feelings; and I have only to add in conclusion, that I am ready and willing to devote not only my life, but my means to the achievement of an enterprise that cannot fail to confer new lustre on the Honourable Company's name.

"With the utmost respect,

"I have the honour to remain,

"Honourable Sirs,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) "THOMAS SIMPSON."

"P.S.—A portable barometer and a superior pocket chronometer would be required by the earliest opportunity. The barometer formerly sent us was broken on the way from Canada, and I cannot, with any propriety, retain C. F. Smith's valuable watch longer."

The Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company agreed to the project laid before them by my brother. The success which had crowned his past exertions, indeed, presaged for the new expedition, a conclusion honourable alike to themselves and to him.

Their letter of acceptance is couched in the following terms:—

"Reverting to the subject of the Arctic Discovery Expedition, the gallantry and excellent management manifested by Messrs. Dease and Simpson in that arduous and interesting service, and the good conduct of the people under their conduct, entitle them to our warmest commendations. The valuable and important services of Messrs. Dease and Simpson have been brought under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, who have not, as yet, noticed the subject.

"We observe that Mr. Dease avails himself of the leave of absence that has been afforded him, with the intention of visiting Canada, this season; and that Mr. Simpson volunteers to conduct another expedition, with the view of continuing the survey from the mouth of the Great Fish River, to the Straits of the Fury and Hecla. We have much satisfaction in availing

ourselves of that gentleman's proferred services; you will, therefore, be pleased to meet any demands that may be made by Mr. Simpson for men, goods, provisions, craft &c., &c.; and to take the necessary measures to give effect throughout the country, to that gentleman's views and wishes, in reference to the important and arduous service on which he is about to re-enter."

This letter never reached my brother; it was dated on the third of June, 1840, and sent out by the Hudson's Bay ships.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Letters written to the Author from Red River Colony.—Departs for England, viâ the Prairies.—"Last scene of all."—Depositions of the Survivors, and Observations thereon.—Appearance.—Character.

LETTER TO THE AUTHOR.

"Red River, May 26, 1840.

"MY DEAREST ALEXANDER,

"I HAVE now to thank you warmly for your very kind and affectionate letters of June and July last, from Lake Winipeg, and of the 6th October from Boat Encampment. Your account of your journey up the Saskatchewan is so amusing, and you are likely to see so many strange and semi-barbarous scenes on the Californian coast, and in the Sandwich Islands, that I would strongly recommend your keeping a journal, with a view to publication. A light and amusing book of travels through countries so very little known, dealing more in anecdote than in scientific details (of which last I for one am tired enough) would be sure to sell, and bring

reputation to the writer. How delightful it would be to me, could we both before the decline of life, 'the sear and yellow leaf,' win a comfortable retreat together in our native land, having but one heart, one soul, and one united family! The friendship of the world I know and feel to be vain and worthless; ours will endure fresh and unchangeable till death. I fancy you will be taking to wife ere long some dark-eyed Señora. You would be a lucky fellow could you fall upon one with ingots enough to emancipate you from Fur Trade thraldom. Wretchedness is the inevitable portion of all who remain too long in this service.

"My own situation at present is a very singular one—uncertain till the canoes arrive whether I shall turn my face again to the North Pole, or towards Merry England. In the mean time I shall give you a brief sketch of our last year's eventful labours.

"The spring of 1839 was unusually early, though at Fort Confidence we had the thermometer at 15° below zero in May. On the 28th of July we attained my extreme pedestrian limit of the 25th of August 1838. From thence the coast forms a stupendous bay, full of indentations, and perplexed with myriads of islands, which, however, tended to fend off the ice, as far

as Cape Geddes in lat. 68° 33′ N., lon. 98° 10′ W. Here, where we least expected it, opened the disputed Strait of Boothia, ten miles wide at either extremity, but only three in the centre. Through this narrow pass we made our way, and on the 16th of August landed on Back's Montreal Island, where we found a *Câche* of pemican, chocolate, and other articles left there

"All we had undertaken to perform was thus achieved, but we, or rather *I*, resolved to do *more*, and we accordingly crossed the estuary to a distant headland, which we discovered and named Cape Britannia. The line of *no variation* passes through this bold promontory, on whose summit we erected a lofty pile of stones, and took possession of our extensive discoveries in the name of our sweet little Queen. We penetrated about fifty miles further to the north-eastward, and the land then turning off to the right, there seemed every probability of our having attained the western side of the great Gulf of Boothia, which, according to Esquimaux report, runs far down to the southward, approaching within forty miles of Repulse and Wager Bays, and then turning up northward to the Strait of the Fury and Hecla. The circuit of this unknown gulf must be about five hundred miles, being all that now remains unexplored of the northern shores of

America. It was an extent far beyond our reach, and on the 20th of August the adverse gales compelled us to return. On our way back we first struck across to Boothia, the southern coast of which we examined for sixty miles, leaving it at "Cape Herschel," fifty-seven miles south of Ross's Pillar, and ninety S.S.W. of the magnetic pole, the dip of the needle wanting only 31′ of the perpendicular. After this, by means of wide traverses, we reached the Victoria Land discovered and named by me in 1838, whose southern coast we explored for a hundred and fifty-six geographical miles, crossing several magnificent bays, which I named after the Duke of Wellington and other high personages, and from Victoria Land we got back to the continent at Cape Barrow by a good traverse of fifty-five statute miles. We had throughout the season a great deal of rough and dangerous sailing, much to the discomfort of my worthy friend Mr. Dease, who was quite out of his element. Winter began on the 29th of August, set in with great severity on the 15th of September, and on the 16th we made our joyful entry into the Copper-mine, after by far the longest voyage ever performed in boats on the Polar Sea. We crossed the barren grounds knee-deep in snow, had the thermometer at 14° below zero in Bear Lake,

and with great risk and difficulty reached Fort Simpson, amidst very heavy drift-ice, on the 14th of October.

"On the 2nd of December, I quitted that snug place with my maps, &c., and, after an unrivalled winter-journey of two months, was welcomed back to Red River by 'King Duncan,' and other friends. I have since been awaiting my future destiny with impatience, and the moment it is decided shall write you again; till then adieu!

"Ever your most affectionate brother,

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

The annual canoes from Canada, which arrived on the 2nd of June 1840, brought him no ratification of his plan, nor news of the reception given by the public to the intelligence of the complete and brilliant success of the previous summer's expedition; indeed, the letters conveying this information did not reach England in time to be acknowledged by that opportunity. The ratification of his plan by the Directors of the Company was transmitted to America by the ships which sail for Hudson's Bay in June; and much anxiety was expressed by them that he should immediately enter on his renewed labours. Unfortunately, the proceedings of their local repre-

sentative, Sir George Simpson, had been very different. He had, as we have seen, thrown cold water on my brother's proposals when they were first submitted to him; and now effectually prevented the immediate organization of a renewed expedition, which the resident officers of the Company would possibly have undertaken at my brother's solicitation on their own responsibility, by desiring his presence in England.

With his usual promptness, my brother at once determined to comply with this intimation; and chose for his journey the most direct and speedy, but the most hazardous and fatiguing route.

The following letter was written to me on the eve of starting on this his last and fatal journey:—

"Red River, June 5, 1840.

"MY DEAREST ALEXANDER,

"I AM just on the move for England, *viâ* the United States; a journey which will, I think, be beneficial to me, as my stomach has been out of order, and my spirits low, for a great part of the spring.

"The light canoe arrived on the 2nd, with Mr. Allan Macdonell; but most of the letters went on to Norway House.

"I, however, received one from Governor

Simpson, written by his Lady, inviting me home. God willing, I shall be out again with him next spring.

"I cannot go into detail regarding friends; it would be a work of supererogation, as you will, no doubt, have volumes from them.

"Our young Queen, you will learn, is mated with her cousin Albert of Cobourg, and the Melbourne ministry is still in power. There are rumours of war with the United States; if true, I may perhaps figure as a *détenu*.

"Three Wesleyan missionaries have come in for Lac la Pluie and the Saskatchewan; and furs have fallen 15 to 20 per cent. in price. Ominous signs these, saying plainly, 'Make hay while the sun shines.' My expenses on this visit will be heavy, and my funds are still light. Government, I fear, will give nothing. However, I shall see.

"To-morrow morning I take my departure, with two companions well mounted and armed, as we expect to fall in with the Sioux, and war is said to be raging in the plains; so that I hope to see something of prairie life.

"Farewell, my dearest brother, and while breath remains believe me ever,

"Your most affectionate brother,

"THOMAS SIMPSON."

In the spring of 1840 I arrived at the Columbia River from a visit of observation and inquiry, which I was instructed to make to the Sandwich Islands. On representing my views in regard to a business to be carried on at those islands to Mr. Macloughlin, the superintendent of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs on the Pacific, he expressed a strong desire that I should at once proceed to England across America, in order to personally explain my plans to the Directors of the Company; but, as my instructions extended to an inquiry into business on the Californian coast, I urged upon Mr. Macloughlin the expediency of my visiting that country previous to setting out for England. He with some reluctance acceded to this.

How little can we poor mortals judge what is best! Had I embraced Mr. Macloughlin's proposal, I should have joined my brother at Red River, have been his companion on the homeward journey, and thus, in all human probability, prevented the sad catastrophe which followed; into the details of which it is my duty now to enter—a duty which, however painful, I must not shrink from.

I would premise that the first intelligence of my brother's death reached me through a New York paper at the Sandwich Islands in January,

1841. The narrative was headed by the appalling title of "Murder and Suicide!" Need I say that such a fearful, unexpected blow, communicated in such a manner, completely paralyzed me? I at once took passage for England; but after my arrival—indeed, until a very late period—I was quite unable to enter into a minute and careful examination of the evidence given by those who participated in the event. My mind "reposed in trembling hope" that the treachery of his half-breed companions had led to the catastrophe.

In this state of feeling, I penned the following remarks, which form part of the brief memoir with which I prefaced my brother's narrative of the expedition:

"The long-treasured animosity, (of his half-breed companions,) was likely to have shewn itself in threats and insults, if not in actual attack; and hence it is the opinion of many intelligent men who have examined the circumstances, and are acquainted with the character of the half-cast natives, resulted the events which cut short my brother's career. If the other supposition should be true, (and there is nothing, save the contradictory statements of his attendants to support it,) if indeed, it pleased Providence to darken the spirit which had passed undaunted through

so many trials—we cannot but acknowledge that the decrees of God are inscrutable to mortals, and join in those beautiful lines of Cowper:

> 'Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,
> Each yielding harmony disposed aright—
> The chords reversed, (a task which if He please,
> God, in a moment, executes with ease,)
> Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
> Lost, till He tune them, all their power and use.'"

A close scrutiny of the statements made by one of the survivors of my brother's party, (from the other no deposition seems to have been taken,) and by two of those who afterwards joined them, has changed this "trembling hope" into a certain conviction, that my brother fell a victim, either to the malice and cupidity of his companions, or to a sudden and unpremeditated quarrel.

I give, first, the Deposition of James Bruce, one of his travelling companions.

"Clayton County, Territory of Iowa.

"Be it known, that on the 13th day of July, 1840, personally appeared before Henry H. Sibley, a Justice of the Peace in and for said county, duly commissioned and sworn, James Bruce of the Red River Colony, Prince Rupert's Land, who, being duly sworn upon the Holy Evange-

lists of Almighty God, touching his knowledge of the events connected with the death of Thomas Simpson, Antoine Legros, and John Bird, deposeth and saith,

"That Deponent left said Red River Colony, in company with several individuals; and that, on the ninth day thereafter, said Deponent, with four others, to wit, said Thomas Simpson, Antoine Legros, senior, and John Bird, as also the son of said Legros, Antoine Legros, junior, left the main camp, with a view of travelling with greater expedition than said main body on their way to St. Peter's. That some days after, having thus separated from said main body, said Thomas Simpson complained of being unwell, and expressed a wish to return. On the morning of the 14th of June he again insisted upon returning to said Red River Colony, and offered a considerable sum of money to each of the others composing the party, if they would return with him, (said Simpson,) to said Colony. Said Simpson appeared very restless and uneasy, and Deponent heard said Simpson express a conviction that he would never recover from his illness. Said Simpson complained of no particular ailment, merely stating that he was not well; and when told that he would meet with a physician at "Lac qui parle," said Simpson said, in reply,

that a physician could do him no good, and that he did not require one. In consequence of the desire expressed by said Simpson to return, on the 14th of June aforesaid, Deponent, with the rest of the party, turned back to join the main camp; and said Simpson was assured, that upon their rejoining said main body, should he, said Simpson still insist upon going back to said Red River Colony, fresh horses should be furnished, and he, said Simpson, be accompanied back to said Colony. On the evening of the said 14th of June Deponent, with his party, encamped about an hour and a half after sun down within a mile of Turtle River; said Simpson was asked if he would have the tent pitched, to which he replied that it was just as the others pleased. While Deponent was engaged with John Bird and Antoine Legros, junior, aforesaid, in raising the tent, Deponent, having his back towards said Simpson, heard the report of a gun; and, on turning round, perceived that said Simpson had shot said Bird through the body. The said Bird groaned and fell dead. Deponent then saw said Simpson turn and shoot said Antoine Legros, senior, with the other barrel of his double-barrelled gun. Said Legros, senior, did not fall immediately, but leaned upon a cart —he fell about two minutes afterwards. Im-

mediately upon the report of the second barrel of said Simpson's gun, Deponent and said Legros, junior, fled a short distance from the cart, when said Simpson called out to Deponent, and asked him, if he, (said Deponent,) was aware of any intention to kill him, (Simpson,) to which Deponent replied, that he had never heard of such intention on the part of any one. Said Simpson then told this Deponent that his life was perfectly safe; and he further told this Deponent that he had shot Bird and Legros because they had intended to murder him, (Simpson,) on that night for his papers; and further, said Simpson told this Deponent that the laws of England would clear him, (Simpson,) from all blame in the matter. Said Legros, senior, who was still alive, then asked said Simpson to allow his (Legros') son to go away unharmed, to which said Simpson consented. Said Simpson then offered this Deponent five hundred pounds to take him, said Simpson, back to the Red River Colony, and keep the affair secret. Said Simpson then asked this Deponent if he would know the road back to Red River, to which this Deponent replied 'Yes.' Said Simpson then told this Deponent to harness the horses. This Deponent remained a considerable time standing in the same place; and Legros, senior, afore-

said, called his son to him, bidding him kiss him for the last time. The said Simpson then asked said Legros, senior, whether it was true that he, said Legros and the said Bird intended to kill him (Simpson), to which Legros answered 'No.' Said Simpson remained with his gun in his hand, while Deponent and Legros, junior, went to where the horses had been placed. This Deponent, and said Legros, junior, then each mounted a horse, and made in the direction of the said main camp. Said main camp might be about two hours' ride from the spot where said Simpson, Legros, and Bird had been left; but said Deponent and said Legros, losing the track, did not reach said main camp until the following morning. Immediately after the arrival at said main camp of this Deponent, with said Legros, junior, this Deponent in company with five others, viz. Joseph Gaubin, James Flett, Harry Sinclair, Robert Logan, and Michel Richotte, returned to the place where said Simpson had been left. Upon approaching, said Simpson was called out to by name by some of this Deponent's party, but no reply was heard. This Deponent saw said Simpson lying in bed on the opposite side of the cart from where this Deponent was. The report of a gun was forthwith heard, and the whistling of a ball in the

air. A remark was made by one of Deponent's party, that said Simpson must have shot himself. This Deponent, with his party, then made a circle around the cart aforesaid, to ascertain whether he, (Simpson,) could be seen to move. Nothing was seen, however, but a dog lying beneath the cart. Said Deponent, with his party aforesaid, continued to call upon Simpson by name; and receiving no reply, they fired at the said dog, and drove him away. Said Deponent, with his said party, then discharged their guns at the top of the cart, with the intention of alarming said Simpson if still alive. After the lapse of some time, this Deponent asked one of the party to accompany him, this Deponent, to the cart, this Deponent stating at the same time, he was under the impression that said Simpson had shot himself. Upon arriving near the said cart, said Simpson was found by said Deponent to have shot himself through the head. Said Simpson was quite dead, as were also said Legros, senior, and Bird. The bodies of said Simpson, Legros, senior, and Bird, were interred in the same grave; the bodies of the two latter were found covered when this Deponent reached the spot where they had been left. A trunk and carpet-bag with a double-barreled gun belonging to said Simpson, were brought on to Lac

qui parle, and there left in charge of Doctor Williamson of that place. Said Deponent further saith, that at no time had said Simpson manifested symptoms of insanity; but that said Simpson acted through the whole affair like a man in the possession of his senses. And further this Deponent saith not.

his
"James ✕ Bruce,
mark."

"Sworn to, and subscribed before me,
at St. Peter's, this 13th day of
July, 1840.

"Henry H. Sibley,
"Justice of the Peace, Clayton County, Iowa."

STATEMENT OF ROBERT LOGAN, JUNIOR, ON OATH.

"I, Robert Logan, joined the party going to the United States at the Assiniboine River, above the Forks, on the 2nd day of June 1840. On the 7th of the said month Mr. Thomas Simpson, accompanied by Mr. John Bird and Antoine Legros, overtook our party at the Grande Point, some fifteen or twenty miles north of Pembuia. Mr. Simpson and his party kept with our party two days and a half; but on the 10th Mr. Simpson, Mr. John Bird, Antoine Legros, James Bruce, and Legros' son, in all five persons, left our party and proceeded

a-head, with the intention of reaching St. Peter's as quick as possible. Our party proceeded also. Early in the morning of the 15th instant, about sun-rise, just as we had left our encampment, Pierish Boutineau, our guide, discovered two riders coming after our party at full speed—he immediately called out "Indians, Indians;" the whole party stopped and proposed conferring, in order to put ourselves in a position for defence, thinking it was an enemy. All this time the riders were approaching us, and had come so near that our guide called out that it was not Indians, and immediately recognised their horses. The riders now joined our party, and proved to be James Bruce and Legros' son, the one riding the horse belonging to Mr. Simpson, the other Mr. Bird's horse. James Bruce immediately stated, that Mr. Thomas Simpson had killed Mr. John Bird and Antoine Legros, with his double-barreled gun, adding, that after leaving our party they had proceeded as far as the river Chienne, then turned back to Turtle river again. On reaching the latter river the party had supper, and, turning round again, went about two miles back on the route to river Chienne; there the party put up for the night, at a late hour, near to a small creek, and that whilst in the act of putting up the tent Mr. Simpson shot

John Bird; then, turning round, shot Legros. As soon as the shot went off James Bruce and young Legros ran off some distance, and in a short time mounted each a horse, and made for our party, coming up with us as already stated at sun-rise, the distance being as near as they could guess fifteen to twenty miles.

"After James Bruce had made the above statement, six of the party, viz., Henry Sinclair, James Flett, James Bruce, Michel Richotte, Gaubin, and myself, volunteered to go back to Mr. Simpson's encampment; and, after riding about three hours, we came in sight of the fatal spot. When about two hundred yards from the place we made a halt, and called out, Mr. Simpson! Mr. Simpson! several times, but no answer; but we distinctly saw Mr. Bird's dog sitting near the cart by the bodies. We then moved round to another position, keeping about the same distance off; when all at once we heard the report of a gun in the direction of the dog and cart, saw the smoke, and *heard the ball whistling over our heads:* we then all halted, and felt confused, supposing that Mr. Simpson had fired at us. After a short consultation we moved on to another place, near the small creek, keeping off about the same distance. We then halted; tied our horses, and proposed firing in the air, or

over the camp, in the direction of the dog and cart. Gaubin fired first; Michel Richotte the second shot, and by it the dog was wounded; the dog immediately went off on three legs; then all the party fired—we fired all twice, but saw nothing more. Richotte then mounted his horse, and rode swiftly by the camp, to see if he could observe Mr. Simpson — some others followed. After passing the spot, we all joined again, when Richotte said he saw Mr. Simpson lying as if dead. Henry Sinclair, James Bruce, and myself, then approached the spot; and on seeing all dead, we called out to the others, and they joined us. The body of John Bird was covered with the tent, and the tent-poles keeping it down. Legros' body was covered with a blanket, and a pillow under his head. *Mr. Simpson's body was lying stretched out, with one leg across the other, and the butt end of his double barreled gun between his legs, the right hand, with the glove off, directed to the trigger, the left hand, with the glove on, holding the gun, near the muzzle, on his breast.* All the head above the nose was blown off, and we found a white night-cap lying some ten or fifteen yards off from the body, with a hole in it, as if made by a gun-shot, and much singed by fire, and some of his hair sticking in it. The five guns belonging to the

party were at the spot, also four pistols. We turned the body, and found it warm, but no signs of life; we then got a hole dug, cut the tent into three pieces, wrapt the bodies up, and bound them altogether; we then gathered up the property, and set off back again for the camp, where we arrived the same day after sun set.

"This is the truth, and nothing but the truth, as far as I can recollect, so help me God!

"ROBERT LOGAN."

"Sworn at Red River, before me, this 14th day of October, 1840.

Signed, "A. Ross, J. P."

James Flett being duly sworn, declared as follows:—

"On the morning of the 15th of June, when James Bruce and Legros' son brought the intelligence of the death of Mr. John Bird and Antoine Legros, I accompanied James Bruce, Henry Sinclair, Robert Logan, Gaubin, and Michel Richotte to the spot, which we approached cautiously; and when within two hundred yards we hallooed, and called him by name, and immediately we heard a shot, and I distinctly heard the hissing of a ball, and Gaubin told me he noticed the same. We then made a turn round the height behind him, and separated ourselves and took the horses, which were standing at

some distance, supposing he would show himself. We approached towards his left; and when within about two hundred yards, we fired in the direction of the cart. Still, not seeing him, Michel Richotte galloped on horseback close behind the spot, but still could not see him. We then approached still nearer by a hollow, but still could not see him. Then James Bruce and Henry Sinclair crawled along the creek, and to within twenty yards, when they called out he was dead.

"*We then approached, and saw him lying with his face downwards,* near, but not on, a blanket, which was spread alongside of the cart. I then began to dig the grave. John Bird was lying on his back, with his arms extended. The tent was thrown over him. *I saw a little blood coming out of his mouth and nose.* I was told a mark of a wound was to be seen in his clothes, but did not see it myself. Saw Simpson's face—the part about the eyes was black. From the root of the nose to the top of the head was blown off. A little blood, but not much, was lying about him; a little had trickled down his cheek, *and it was dry.* I did not feel his body—do not know if it was warm. I saw smoke when I heard the report. I do not know how many shots were fired, as we did not all fire together.

Do not believe any hit him. Was told that Legros had vomited his supper, and that he was covered with a blanket, with a pillow under his head. Saw the pillow, which was said to be used for the purpose. Saw his (Simpson's) cap, but not the place where it was found; believe it was some distance. Simpson's eyes were not blown off—his eye-socket was not off; forget if his eye-brows were blown off; distinctly saw his brains. *Was told one of his hands was grasping the barrel of his gun; and the other, that is, his right hand, downwards towards the trigger: but this I did not see—at least, do not remember if I did.* Bird and Legros were lying within about eight paces of each other, and Simpson was lying near them. Gaubin was dressing the bodies while I was digging the grave. Believe it was about half an hour from the time we heard the report of the gun till we found out he was dead. When the report was heard, Bruce called out, 'He is firing at us!' I said, 'I think he has fired at himself.'

"The above is a correct statement of the facts to which I have sworn.

"JAMES FLETT."

"Sworn before me, this 11th day of October, 1840.

"John Bunn, Magistrate."

I shall proceed to animadvert on these statements, and on the conduct of the parties from whom they proceeded.

The first point to which I shall direct attention is, the extraordinary fact that none of the party concerned in the affair returned to Red River Settlement to give immediate information of it. They were distant but three, or at most four, days' journey from Fort Garry; and it is impossible to suppose that, had they been conscious of innocence, they would not at once have returned to give information, instead of continuing their journey to St. Peter's.

I have already alluded to my brother's minute attention to details. In no particular was he more exact than in keeping an accurate record in his journal of each day's proceedings; a full narrative of the expeditions to and on the coast could have been given to the world by merely transcribing from his note books. Is it likely that he discontinued his diary when entering on new and most interesting ground? But no diary was delivered with his papers. *The conclusion is, that it was destroyed or kept back by his companions.*

But one document remained unobserved by them, which affords conclusive evidence of the falsehood of some of the statements contained in

these affidavits. This is a pocket-map which was delivered among his papers at Lac qui parle, and is now in my possession.

The preliminary facts stated are,

That my brother, accompanied by John Bird and Antoine Legros, started from Fort Garry on the 6th of June.

That on the following day they overtook a larger party of colonists travelling to St. Peter's.

That, they accompanied this party for two days and a half.

That, tired of its slow progress, my brother, accompanied by John Bird, Antoine Legros, his son, and James Bruce, quitted it, (on the forenoon of the 9th,) with the view of travelling quicker.

All this is perfectly clear, and perfectly corroborated by the map. On this map the route, and camping places up to the 12th are as distinctly marked as those on his discovery-charts.

But of their future proceedings they give a very vague account, and that account, vague as it is, is contradicted by the map in an essential particular.

The furthest point reached is acknowledged to be Chienne River; and the map proves that this point was attained on the night of the 12th. The marches of the two days being respectively forty-five and fifty-five miles.

Bruce asserts that the return was commenced

on the morning of the 14th; and that the same night the catastrophe took place within two miles of Turtle River. Now, the distance by the track from Chienne to Turtle River is no less than ninety-five miles. It was impossible that this could have been performed in one day. It must have occupied two days, the 13th and 14th, from the evidence afforded by the chart, that the 12th was the date of encampment at Chienne River. The affidavit of Bruce distinctly states that the 14th only was occupied in a retrograde-march.

What could have caused my brother to commence this retrograde movement?

Of insanity he had exhibited not the slightest symptom while at Red River, nor yet while accompanying the larger party; indeed, Bruce expressly declares that "at no time had he manifested symptoms of insanity, but acted through the whole affair like a man in the possession of his senses."

Would an insane man who had begun a massacre stop midway, and talk coolly with the survivors and spectators? Incredible! Would the powerful volition, which ever accompanies insanity, permit his remaining for a whole night beside the corpses in the encampment? would it not have rather driven him to follow the example of the others—take horse and away?

There is, then, the strongest evidence against his insanity. But a sane man of course he could not have been, if the statements made in these depositions are true.

But they manifestly are untrue. The whole account is a tale devised—but not cunningly.

"What," I again ask, "could have caused my brother to commence this retrograde march?" The same cause that, I believe, led to his death—the treachery of his half-breed companions.

I have alluded to the evil passions of this race, and to the hostility which they had previously exhibited towards my brother. One of the most dangerous of this class was John Bird; the others I believe to have been mere puppets in his hands. Bird was the son of an old officer of the Company. He had received some education and instruction from his father; but was nourished and brought up in all the fierce excitement of a prairie life.

The *secret* of the north-west passage, which Bird and his fellows conceived to be exclusively contained in the papers carried by my brother, was one which he believed to be worth a large sum. In the statement of Bruce we have an allusion to the papers. It never could have been supposed by my brother, had not the suspicion been raised in his mind by something

dropped by his companions, that the possession of his papers would be an object sufficient to induce his murder. He, of course, knew well that the possession of his papers could not be of the slightest value to his companions. How then can we account for his asking Legros "if it was not intended to murder him for his papers?" Clearly the suggestion must, originally, have come through themselves.

I believe that class animosity, joined to a desire of enriching himself, as he thought he should do, by possessing himself of the secret of the north-west passage, led Bird to plan my brother's murder.

That my brother discovered the plot at River Chienne, and that he feigned sickness, as a pretence for turning back from thence.

There is positive evidence in the map, that *two* days, the 13th and 14th, were occupied in this retrograde movement,—days and nights passed in mutual watchings and suspicions; and, finally, that in the night of the 14th Bird and Legros were shot by my brother in self-defence; his own life being either sacrificed at the same time, or desperate wounds inflicted upon him.

The story of a report being heard as the party approached in the morning—of a ball whistling over their heads—and their subsequent firing at

the encampment, are sheer inventions—they are evidently inconsistent and improbable, and the statements made by Logan and Flett, in regard to the position of his body, are directly contradictory. They found him either dead, or wounded, and dispatched him.

Such is my belief of the true circumstances of this sad tragedy, arrived at after a very minute examination of all the details given,—a belief which I think none of my readers will consider ill-founded.

His remains, after lying for some months at the scene of death were removed to Red River colony, and now repose in its churchyard.

He perished a fortnight before he had completed his thirty-second year.

My brother's stature was rather under the middle size, his height being only five feet five and a half inches, but he was broad-shouldered, and strongly limbed—with, however, much symmetry of figure.

His face was round and full, and its expression was open and engaging; brown hair clustered in thick curls* over a brow of massive breadth

* After his arduous labours in Arctic discovery, "grey did somewhat mingle with his brown." This was the only alteration in his appearance, caused by three years' physical fatigues and mental anxieties, such as have seldom if ever been surpassed.

The eyes were small, and had a merry twinkle, giving an air of laughing cheerfulness to the upper part of his countenance; while, in striking contrast, the expression of the mouth was that of stern decision.

Of his character I need say little. It may well be judged by his actions, and by the extracts which I have given from his confidential correspondence. He was brave, judicious, enthusiastic, and persevering; while his love and affection to his relatives were indeed "such as the world, as it goes, knows little of."

He won for himself, under very trying and discouraging circumstances, the highest distinction that could be achieved in the field of Arctic discovery. After achieving it he unhappily and prematurely perished.

"*Ex pede Herculem!*" He possessed qualities, which, had his lot been cast in a more genial sphere of action, would have raised him to useful eminence, which, in any rank of life, would have made him beloved and respected.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Rewards of Service.—The Author's Correspondence with Sir Robert Peel, Bart.—Sir John Barrow, Bart.—The Hudson's Bay Company.—Sir George Simpson.

As already stated, the intelligence of my brother's death reached me at the Sandwich Islands in January 1841: I at once took shipping and landed in England in the month of May.

His narrative of the expedition, which I was well aware he had carefully prepared before leaving Fort Simpson, I found was not yet received from the American officer, at "Lac qui parle," into whose hands it had been delivered by the survivors of the party. Regarding this narrative I felt much anxiety, as its publication was now the only further evidence that could be given of my brother's merits and services. But I found to my surprise that an arrangement had been made for its temporary suppression, and ultimate embodiment in a work proposed to be compiled by another at some future time. *

* This contemplated arrangement was intimated in a letter

To this unjust purpose, I at once objected; and I succeeded in obtaining a promise that, on its arrival in England, it should be published in my brother's own name. This arrival was unnecessarily delayed for several months. It came into the hands of Sir George Simpson in May, but did not reach England till late in October; and before that time I was on my return to Polynesia.

At my earnest request Colonel Sabine undertook a revision of the manuscript; his opinion of it is expressed in the following letter:

"Woolwich, July 18th, 1843.

"DEAR SIR,

"I AM very glad that you have returned to England in time to be present when your brother's narrative is published. In your absence I undertook to examine the manuscript, and make any alterations which might appear to me to be required. On perusal, I found the work in a state of such complete preparation, that the alterations which I saw any occasion to make were

from Sir George Simpson to Sir J. Henry Pelly of 25th Feb. 1841, in the following terms:—"His" (my brother's) "Journals or Narrative I should, if you have no objection, wish to be reserved for myself, to be embodied in a work which, if I live to return and can command a little leisure time, I have it in contemplation to publish."

very few indeed, and these chiefly of a verbal nature. Not having seen the proof sheets, I am not aware whether any further changes have been made since the manuscript passed out of my hands some months ago: but it impressed me with an additionally high respect for your brother's memory, that he should have drawn up the narrative of the expedition on the spot, in such a complete manner that it might quite well have been printed *verbatim*.

"Believe me, dear Sir,

"Sincerely yours,

"EDWARD SABINE."

"Alexander Simpson, Esq."

Previous to leaving England I drew up a memoir of my brother. Facts were then fresh in my memory; his extended correspondence with me was before me; I quoted largely from it, and gave his last two letters (pages 345 and 350) entire. I unluckily retained no copy of this memoir; and in my absence it was mis-laid, or *suppressed*.

On my return to England late in June 1843, I found that the narrative was on the eve of publication, without any prefatory memoir. I had left all my correspondence abroad; was engaged in daily communication on the affairs of

Polynesia, with Her Majesty's Government, and reluctantly contented myself with prefacing the narrative, by "the interesting but meagre sketch of my brother's biography," already adverted to.

In consideration of the services of the Arctic Expedition, Her Majesty's Government bestowed on the Chairman of the Court of Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, (Mr. J. H. Pelly) the dignity of a Baronet, while on Mr. George Simpson, the local Govenor, (to whom the planning of the expedition was ascribed,) a Knighthood was conferred. To each of the leaders of the expedition, Mr. Peter W. Dease and my brother, an annual pension of One hundred pounds was apportioned: in my brother's case, from his early death, this was entirely nugatory.

After long resisting the advices of my friends to lay my claims, as my brother's heir, before Her Majesty's Government, from a feeling that a grant to be valued should be spontaneous—I consented to bring them forward. The result will be gleaned from the following correspondence.

A succeeding correspondence will give an idea of the *justice* of the Body which my brother so honorably and so painfully served.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SIR ROBERT PEEL, AND THE AUTHOR.

"To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart., First Lord of the Treasury.

"THE MEMORIAL OF ALEXANDER SIMPSON:

"SHOWETH,

"That your Memorialist is the only brother of the late Thomas Simpson, who, in conjunction with Mr. Peter Warren Dease, conducted the expedition fitted out in the year 1836, by the Hudson's Bay Company, for exploring the Northern Coast of America.

"That the said expedition was occupied in that service for the space of three years, during which period, exposed to dangers and difficulties of no ordinary kind, it traced the Arctic Coast of America, from the mouth of the Mackenzie River to Point Barrow, and from the mouth of the Coppermine River to the Gulf of Boothia; thus solving the grand problem which had engaged the attention of the world for three centuries—that there exists a passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

"That your Memorialist refers to a letter addressed, on the 22nd April, 1840, by Sir J. Henry

Pelly, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, to Lord John Russell, then Colonial Secretary, and to the Narrative of the Expedition recently published, for proof of the fact, that it was by his brother's exertions that this result—so interesting to science, and so honourable to Great Britain—was attained.

"That your Memorialist's brother volunteered to conduct another expedition to survey the North-eastern Angle of America, from Back's Fish River, on the Arctic Coast, to Wager River, on the Coast of Hudson's Bay: but that his untimely death prevented his entering on that service.

"That Her Majesty's Government announced in the year 1840, (the year in which his death took place,) its intention of granting to the said Thomas Simpson a pension of one hundred pounds sterling per annum.

"That your Memorialist ventures to hope that the services rendered to geographical science by his said brother will appear to you to entitle his relatives to some provision from the State.

"That the said Thomas Simpson, conceiving that he had established a claim upon the State by his services in proving the existence of a North-west passage—did, by his last will, expressly bequeath such claim to your Memorialist.

"Wherefore your Memorialist prays, that you

will, considering these circumstances, advise Her Majesty to bestow on your Memorialist any reward which his said brother may have merited from the State by his arduous and successful labours. "ALEXADER SIMPSON."

"15, Arundel Street, Strand, August 1843."

"Whitehall, 30th August, 1843.

"SIR,

"I AM desired by Sir Robert Peel to acknowledge the receipt of the Memorial which you have addressed to him; and to express his regret that it is not in his power to appropriate to your use any portion of the very limited fund placed by Parliament under the control of the Crown, for the reward of eminent public service."

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"W. H. STEVENSON"

"Alex. Simpson, Esq."

"London, September 5th, 1843.

"SIR,

"I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the letter of Mr. W. H. Stevenson, in which he is directed by you, in reply to my Memorial having reference to the services of my brother, to express your regret that it is not in your power to appropriate to my use 'any portion of the very limited fund

placed by Parliament under the control of the Crown for the reward of eminent public service.'

"In the case of my brother it will hardly be doubted that eminent public service was rendered: and his early death—the consequence of that service—would not, I feel well assured, be considered by the Queen of England and by the English nation, as cancelling all claims on their gratitude and generosity.

"The survey of the Arctic coast of America, with the view of thereby ascertaining the existence of a passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, was the sole object of two expeditions fitted out by the British Government, and became the object of an expedition, supported principally by the British public. Although neither succeeded in their object, yet the country was convinced that every exertion had been made by the distinguished officers who commanded the expeditions, and saw with pleasure that promotion, and employments and titles, were conferred upon them. This object was fully attained through my brother's exertions; and the claims which he thereby established on his country his death did not abrogate. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,

"ALEXANDER SIMPSON."

"The Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel."

CORRESPONDECE BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND SIR JOHN BARROW, BART.

"28, Devonshire Street, Portland Place,
"January 30th, 1844.

"SIR,

"I HAVE perused with much delight, the article in the last Quarterly Review, on the subject of the services towards Arctic Discovery of my late brother; an article which bears intrinsic evidence of coming from your pen.

"The high estimate which you have given to the world of the interest of the discoveries effected by my brother's exertions, is, it appears to me, a strong confirmation of the opinion entertained by myself and those whom I have consulted, that the neglect of the British Government in not rewarding my brother's services in the only way in its power, through his surviving relations, arises from the fact, that the claims established by my brother have not been clearly brought under the consideration of the heads of Her Majesty's Government.

"Permit me to entreat the exercise of your influence on this subject. I should be ashamed to ask this influence, were I actuated by mere mercenary motives: by such I am not swayed:

but I and my relatives feel that services, such as those rendered by my brother, are fitting to receive the State's reward: such they have never received; and from this neglect we deem that our relative's memory receives but small justice. The British nation has never been slow to reward distinguished merit: and we ask for some testimony of our country's gratitude; not for its own sake, but as a record and acknowledgment.

"You have always taken a prominent part in promoting Arctic Discovery: and I feel that from you would come, with propriety, a recommendation for the reward of the services which you have described as being most effectual towards that object.

"I abstained for several years after my brother's death, from any application to Government on this subject: deeming that, until the publication of his own 'Narrative' his arduous exertions could hardly be appreciated.

"It may, possibly, have appeared to Her Majesty's Government, that the Hudson's Bay Company would have deemed it a duty to mark its respect for the memory of their distinguished officer by a provision for his relatives; but such has not been the case. I have the honour, &c.

"ALEXANDER SIMPSON."

"Sir John Barrow, Bart."

"Admiralty, Feb. 2nd, 1844.

"DEAR SIR,

"You are not singular in ascribing the article in the Quarterly Review, concerning your late unfortunate brother's discoveries to me: but I have no claim to the compliment you are pleased to pay me: I did not write it; nor do I know who is the author, but I most cordially agree in all that the writer has stated, both as to the merits of your brother, and the value of his discovery.

"With respect to any remuneration or public testimonial, on the part of Government, it appears to me that, as the expedition was set forth by the Hudson's Bay Company, and carried into execution by a servant of that Company, they are unquestionably the party who should remunerate, or, at least, who should originate the proposal to the First Minister of the Crown: and they might well do it on public grounds; the question has been decided, which after very great expense was left undecided by the expeditions sent out by the Government.

"I am going to the Treasury in a few days, and will put your letter into Sir George Clerk's hands: but I anticipate his answer, that their Lordships will not entertain any expense for a service that was not done under any department of the Government.

"I mentioned the subject last night to some of the members of the Royal Society, and it was hinted that if an application was made to Sir Robert Peel, by yourself, if the Company decline to do it, for some public testimonial, a marble tablet, for instance, erected by Government for his public services in the wide field of Arctic Discovery, he might, perhaps, assent to it. He wrote to me regarding Mr. Weddel's discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere; and I believe he settled something on the widow.

"If you should decide to send a memorial to Sir Robert Peel stating what your brother has accomplished, you are at full liberty to refer him to me; and if he does so, which is not improbable, I may be able to impress on him the value I ascribe to his labours; more, I fear, I have not the means of doing.

"Believe me very sincerely, and with best wishes for success,

"Very truly yours,

"JOHN BARROW."

"Alexander Simpson, Esq."

"28, Devonshire Street, Portland Place,
Feb. 3rd, 1844.

"DEAR SIR,

"I FEEL very grateful to you for your kind favour of yesterday.

"In the course of last summer I made an application to Sir Robert Peel, on the subject of the services of my brother, my memorial being forwarded to him through Sir J. Henry Pelly. The curt and unsatisfactory answer which it received, was the cause of the remark in my last letter to you, that these services had not been duly weighed by the heads of Her Majesty's Government.

"My answer (which with the memorial, &c. I have the honour to inclose), is perhaps, wanting in temper; but I was just at the period somewhat crossed, by the failure of a measure to accomplish which I had made large sacrifices, and devoted much time and labour—the annexation of the Sandwich Islands to the British Crown; and excited by news which had just reached me, that the bigoted population of my native town had, by threatened violence, caused the removal in my absence of a marble tablet to my brother's memory, which I had erected in the parish church.*

* The cause of this outrage was the alleged suicide of my brother. The tablet has since been replaced in the county buildings of Ross-shire, and bears the following inscription:—

In memory
of
THOMAS SIMPSON,
a native of this county,
who departed this life on the
15th of June, 1840,

"I should be pleased to have your counsel on the subject, in addition to the assistance which you have so kindly tendered, and remain

"Your much obliged and faithful servant,

"ALEXANDER SIMPSON."

"Sir John Barrow, Bart."

"Admiralty, Feb. 5th, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"AFTER what has passed, as you inform me, the matter appears to be conclusive, so far as Sir Robert Peel is concerned. It is quite clear that he does not feel himself authorized to grant any pecuniary aid to the family of one not having held any situation in the public service.

"We are in all the departments so bound up by rules and regulations, established by Orders in Council, with regard to money matters; and as Sir Robert states, the allowance granted to the Queen is quite inadequate to answer the claims made upon it.

"I much regret his decision with regard to your brother's case; and I really know not where

a few days before he had completed
his thirty-second year.
Though removed so early he had already attained
the high distinction of being the Discoverer
of the long-sought North-west Passage.

to advise you to apply: it is obvious, however, that if he was in any ways a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company — that is the body to apply to.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Very truly yours,

"JOHN BARROW."

"Alexander Simpson, Esq."

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

"5, Albany Street, Edinburgh,
"May 20th, 1844.

"HONOURABLE SIRS,

"I HAVE the honour to acknowledge Mr. Secretary Barclay's letter of the 13th instant, which as well as that of the 30th ultimo, reached me as unstamped letters.

"As you state yourselves 'to be at a loss to understand, from the vagueness of my expressions, what it is I require of you,' I have the honour to state, that, as the natural as well as appointed heir of my brother, I ask for the fulfilment of the promises made to him on undertaking Arctic Discovery, and this would consist in apportioning to his estate—

"The share of profit of a Chief Trader from the year 1837 to 1840, and

"The share of profit of a Chief Factor, commencing with 1840; deducting therefrom his annual salary of £100, from 1837 to 1840—the sum of four hundred pounds which he received from you, and his Chief Trader's share from 1840.

"It appears clear from my brother's papers in my possession,* and now in course of preparation for the press,

"That he was applied to by Governor Simpson to draw out the plan for Arctic Discovery;

"That the plan acted upon was exclusively his;

"That the command of the expedition was at first promised him;

"That an ostensible senior officer was appointed for the *professed* reason of quieting jealousies in your territories.

"That the discoveries effected were effected by my brother alone, the world has already acknowledged.

"Previous to starting on the expedition, your responsible agent in North America, Governor Simpson, promised to my brother a Chief Tradership in return for his past services. I claim the

* These papers only reached me in the spring, 1844!

fulfilment of that promise, the year after it was made.

"He promised him a Chief Factorship on reaching Back's Great Fish River. He reached it in 1839; and I claim the fulfilment of that promise from 1840.

"The power to appoint officers to the emoluments of Chief Factors and Chief Traders is, by the constitution of the Company, solely vested in you. Sir George Simpson is your avowed confidential agent. *Qui agit per alium agit per se.*

"That my brother perished, is surely no reason for withholding from his heirs the rewards which he had won by his past services; particularly when, as is notorious, those services had much influence in obtaining for you, from the British Government, the gratuitous renewal of your grant of trade, and were the sole means of obtaining for your Home and American Governors the titles which they bear.

"I have the honour to be,

"Honourable Sirs,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"ALEXANDER SIMPSON."

"To the Governor, Deputy Governor,
and Committee, of
The Honourable Hudson's Bay Company."

"Hudson's Bay House,
London, May 23rd, 1844.

"SIR,

"YOUR letter dated the 20th instant, setting forth certain claims against the Hudson's Bay Company, founded on a promise stated to have been made to your late brother, by Sir George Simpson, has been laid before the Governor and Committee, who have directed me to make the following reply thereto.

"Sir George Simpson is not the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, but a commissioned officer invested with limited and well-known powers. Your brother was fully aware that he had no authority to bestow appointments, and that the utmost that he could do in promoting any officer was to recommend him (with the approbation of a majority of the Council), to the Governor and Committee.

"Whatever promise, therefore, Sir George Simpson may have given your brother, must have been perfectly understood by both parties to be such as he had power to fulfil, and as the rules of the service would allow to be carried into effect; but cannot, by any reasonable construction, be supposed to imply, that your brother, who had then done nothing whatever to distinguish himself, was to be advanced

instanter over the heads of officers who had been more than twice as long in the service, and who had much stronger claims on the Company.

"For these reasons the Governor and Committee consider your claims totally inadmissible.

"I have the honour to be

"Your obedient servant,

"A. BARCLAY, Secretary."

"Alexander Simpson, Esq."

"5, Albany St., Edinburgh, May 27th, 1844.

"HONOURABLE SIRS,

"IN closing my correspondence with you, I must take leave to refer to the reasons which you allege for 'repudiating' claims, which are at least *morally* binding on you.

"These are,

"First—That my brother previous to entering upon Arctic Discovery had no claims upon you.

"My brother having passed through a collegiate education with distinguished credit, consented to enter your service for particular duties, with particular prospects held out to him. For a very paltry pittance he performed those duties for seven years—a longer term of probation than he had been led to anticipate.

"Second—That Sir George Simpson is not the

Agent of the Company; and that my brother must have perfectly understood that the promises which I urge were beyond his real power.

"I find in your communications with the Government and the Press, that you ascribe to Sir George Simpson the merit of all the arrangements connected with the expedition for Arctic Discovery. I find from a series of my brother's letters that he distinctly understood (and he had been long cognizant of the working of your service), that Sir George Simpson's promises were valid.

"You add, that Sir George Simpson's recommendations to you required the approbation of a majority of the Council—a statement which is diametrically opposed to the constitution of the Company—as explained by yourselves in your letter of the 8th of March, 1834—'The only other alteration determined on is, that the Company (yourselves) shall have the power of electing Chief Factors and Chief Traders to fill vacancies in those classes, instead of being confined to the nomination of the Councils as heretofore.'

"You cannot deny that the promises I urge were made; or that the services rendered on the faith of these promises tended greatly to your pecuniary advantage, and obtained honours for your acting principals.

"To refuse the fulfilment of them is at least discreditable. I have the honour to be

"Your most obedient servant,

"ALEXANDER SIMPSON."

"To the Governor, Deputy Governor,
and Committee of
The Honourable Hudson's Bay Company."

(A fulfilment of the promises made would occasion the payment to me of between two and three thousand pounds.—A. S.)

LETTER TO SIR GEORGE SIMPSON, GOVERNOR OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S TERRITORIES.

"Dingwall, December 2nd, 1844.

"SIR,

"THE papers of my late brother were forwarded to me from Hudson's Bay in the autumn of last year.

"My brother's well known systematic attention to detail led me to a certain conviction, that in his trunks would have been found all the letters he received during his Arctic residence. When they reached me a great portion of these letters—I especially advert to those from yourself—were wanting.

"The depositories of deceased persons are in all

countries, pretending to law or government, held sacred from examination, save by authorized persons, and from spoliation by any person. I hesitate not to assert, that the depositories of my brother were rifled of valuable papers; and I call upon you who hold rule in the country in which the violation was, as I believe, committed, to take cognizance of such an unjustifiable proceeding.

"The abstractors, though they removed (as no doubt they were ordered to remove) all such papers as might afford me legal grounds for proceeding against the Hudson's Bay Company for the fulfilment of pledges given to my brother, fortunately passed unnoticed a small bundle containing original sketches of letters addressed by my brother to you, previous to and during his Arctic expedition.

"*You* know what comments these letters would bear out: but I shall, at present, confine myself to the pledges which they inform me you gave him previous to his entering on Arctic discovery.

"I stated to the Directors of the Hudson's Bay Company the claims grounded on these pledges thus,—

"'Previous to starting on the expedition as your responsible agent in North America, Governor

Simpson, promised to my brother a Chief Tradership in return for his past services. I claim the fulfilment of that promise the year after it was made.

"'He promised him a Chief Factorship on reaching Back's Great Fish River. He reached it in 1839; and I claim the fulfilment of that promise from 1840.

"'The power to appoint officers to the emoluments of Chief Factors and Chief Traders is, by the Constitution of the Company, solely vested in you. Sir George Simpson is your avowed confidential Agent. *Qui agit per alium agit per se.*'

"The claims thus set forth were 'repudiated' by the Honourable Directors on the ground 'that you had no authority to bestow appointments:' but, Sir, that you made such promises as induced my brother to believe that such appointments were to be his immediate reward is clear and undeniable; and I now call upon you to come forward and obtain their fulfilment.

"I am, Sir,

"Your very obedient servant,

"ALEXANDER SIMPSON."

No answer has been received to the above.

POSTSCRIPT ON ARCTIC DISCOVERY.

It will be observed by reference to my brother's letters, and to his last will, that he considered that, through his discoveries, *the question of the existence of a north-west passage had been finally solved in the affirmative.* It will also have been seen that the opinions of the English press were to the same effect: in fact, that thereon he founded his claim.

Was this claim unfounded?—Can any subsequent explorations deprive him of the merit of connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by an open sea-communication?

To this point I have already adverted; and I should not have returned to the subject, had I not observed, while preparing the foregoing pages for the press, that it is in contemplation by the British Government to send out another maritime expedition—(how many have already failed!)—for the discovery of a North Polar passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The connexion by my brother of the discovery on the Polar coasts of Beechey, Franklin, and Back, forming a continuous line of Arctic American Sea-board of sixty-two degrees of longitude, is, of course, perfectly incontrovertible. The only possible point on which a doubt

can be hung as to his having completed the junction of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, is, whether he reached the same sea which Sir John Ross sailed down in the Victory, passing through Barrow's Straits, and Prince Regent's Inlet; and which Parry saw before him from the western extremity of the Straits of 'the Fury and Hecla.'

His own opinion that he had reached this gulf is thus expressed:—"We could therefore hardly doubt being now arrived at that large gulf uniformly described by the Esquimaux as containing many islands, and with many indentations running down to the southward, till it approaches within forty miles of Repulse and Wager Bays."

The correctness of this opinion has not been questioned by those best acquainted with the subject, until a very recent period, when a conjecture has been hazarded, that 'North Somerset is a part of the main continent of America.' *

This conjecture implies the existence of an isthmus connecting Boothia Felix with the continent. As I have already pointed out such an isthmus was asserted by Sir John Ross to exist. Back's voyage went far to disprove this assertion, and an inspection of the chart, as now

* Dr. King in letters on Arctic Discovery addressed to Sir J. Barrow.

all but filled up by my brother's discoveries, will, I am convinced, satisfactorily prove its incorrectness.

It will be seen that after passing through a narrow strait, in which there was a rapid rush of tide from the east,* my brother passed the Estuary of Back's Great Fish River, and proceeding some distance further, with a clear sea, reached lon. 94° 14′; and obtained a view of the coast for eight miles further. This was an advance to precisely the same parallel of longitude that had been reached by Sir John Ross in the Victory; and the distance between the two points attained in their sea-going craft, *i. e.*, Felix Harbour (Ross), and River Castor and Pollux (Simpson), is less than one hundred miles in a line due north and south. Pedestrian excursions made from the Victory reduce this blank to less than sixty miles.

* I find it recorded in my brother's notes (there is but one other case which has come under my notice, in which his notes add to the distinctness of his dispatches and narrative), that "there are strong currents or little races among the islands in the Strait of Boothia, also in the estuary of the Great Fish River." If the comparatively open sea, to which the Strait of Boothia led, were merely a *cul de sac*, as the junction of Boothia Felix to the continent would make it, how are we to account for these "strong currents or little races?" Are they not indicatory of this being the open passage between two oceans?

There is nothing to induce a belief or supposition that there exists any obstructing land between these two points: on the contrary, there are the strongest reasons to conclude that there is an open-sea communication between them.

With the plan of the maritime expedition to be sent by Her Majesty's Government to the Arctic Regions, I am quite unacquainted: but taking naturally a deep interest in, and having long and attentively studied the subject, I cannot forbear making a few remarks in regard to it.

My decided opinion is, that the most advisable channel for vessels to attempt the passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean is through Barrow's Straits, Prince Regent's Inlet, the Straits of Boothia, and thence along the Arctic American coast to Behring's Straits: and I express a strong conviction, that notwithstanding the uncertainties of Arctic navigation, a passage may be accomplished through this channel with only one winter's delay, in the Polar seas: *nay, that by good fortune a passage from sea to sea might be accomplished the same season.*

It is certainly within the bounds of perfect probability, that by following the Eastern coast of Prince Regent's Inlet, and Boothia Gulf beyond the Straits of the Fury and Hecla, (as yet an unsurveyed coast,) and thence traversing

westward, the river 'Castor and Pollux' might be reached before the 20th of August. After that date my brother made good his way, in open boats, in an open sea, frequently delayed by storms, but not by ice, to the mouth of the Coppermine River. Supposing that the vessels attained this point too late to push further westward, they might be secured for the winter in one of the numerous harbours of Victoria Land, or of the continent, of which the shores here, and for a considerable part of the way to the Mackenzie River, are bold and easy of approach.

There would be abundant occupation for the officers in spring and early summer, in making pedestrian journeys to the northward, and in a careful examination of the copper deposits long known to exist near the mouth of the Coppermine River, and which my brother discovered on Barry's Islands in Bathurst's Inlet.

Those journeys, if well planned and directed,*

* It would much facilitate and increase the prospect of success of such journeys, if a few men accustomed to travelling with dogs and snow shoes were shipped, instead of the crews being composed solely of genuine *Jack Tars,* good men and true, in their own element, but, of course, perfect novices in this mode of travelling. In the Orkney Islands there could be found many men who have wintered in the fur countries bordering on "the barren grounds," hence well qualified to traverse the *warmer* bays of the Arctic Ocean."

might do much to connect 'Victoria Land' with the land seen by Parry to the South of Melville Island. My belief is, that there is a Polar continent, or close Archipelago of islands, of which 'Victoria Land' (Simpson) and 'Wollaston Land' (Richardson) are the southern extremities, while 'Bank's Land' (Parry) forms part of its northern coast. Its western extremity, I think, will be about long. 125°. Whether it is continuous on the eastward to Boothia Felix, or not, is a question which, I believe, exploration will decide in the affirmative.

I have a strong opinion that the copper deposits will be found of much value: moreover, that their working would be by no means an impracticable scheme, when once the way has been opened to private enterprise by well-directed Government efforts. In these straits and bays, I also believe that our whale fishermen would find a rich and virgin field for the prosecution of their daring but lucrative enterprises.

The second season of open water should certainly suffice for the passage between the Coppermine and Behring's Straits, particularly after the convincing evidence given by my brother's success, *that September is really the month most propitious to Arctic navigation.* A. S."

"Ross-shire, March, 1845."

THE INDIANS OF NORTHERN AMERICA.

AN INQUIRY INTO THEIR CHARACTER—THEIR CONDITION.

AN INQUIRY INTO THEIR CHARACTER.

A QUARTER of a century ago, the poet's description of the Red men of North America as "stoics of the woods—men without a tear," was considered no romantic picture. Latterly the opinion of the world has receded into the opposite extreme.

While there was much illusion in the *beau idéal* of dignity and bravery that was long received as the correct delineation of the American Indians, but scant justice has been done by late writers to many noble and interesting traits of character which they exhibit.

Let us first consider the causes which led to exaggerated ideas regarding them.

The pilgrim fathers of New England found the tribes in whose country they landed, haughty, bold, and treacherous, repaying by the most fierce attacks and horrible massacres the injuries which they considered the white men had done them by

settling in their country, and encroaching on their hunting-grounds: the lovely vale of Wyoming is a true type of many a fair scene suddenly and fearfully devastated.

They found them, also, sternly resolute in enduring the punishments which the New Englanders—when the fortunes of the desultory yet destructive warfare turned in their favour—did not fail to inflict on the wicked and blood-thirsty savages, who disquieted them in the retreat to which they had fled from oppression in their native land. The pilgrims and their descendants for more than half a century, never met the Red men save in a bloody skirmish, or in a solemn council at which some temporary truce was to be arranged, consequently, had little opportunity for observing their real manners and character; and the remembrance of injuries received prevented their forming anything like a calm and correct estimate. In the chronicles of the early settlers in New England will be found abundant evidence of the feeling of hatred mixed with dread, which they entertained towards the race by which they were surrounded.

During the war between England and France, which ended in the capture of Quebec, and the expulsion of the French from Canada, in which war the New Englanders nobly bore their share,

the Red men were again encountered,—not now indeed, fighting with the hope of exterminating or expelling the Whites, but employed as mercenaries by one or other of the contending powers. During the revolutionary war they were again so employed; and to the disgrace of civilization, even in the nineteenth century, British battalions were accompanied by bands of painted warriors, whose chiefs affected to consider themselves as independent allies, and observed towards our officers a haughty and stately bearing: the proud answer of Tecumseth, when he refused the decorations of a brigadier general, is of historical record.

Under such circumstances alone were the Indians of North America, for a long time, known to all save the few adventurous traders settled among them. They were met as ruthless enemies in bloody skirmishes, or seen acting the part of auxiliaries anxious to increase the value of their services, and well aware that their best means of accomplishing this object, was to show themselves to their allies, or more properly employers, in their most imposing attitudes. Hence their haughty reserve, their solemn councils, and their frightful war-dances.

View we now the other side of the picture.

In these "piping times of peace," gentlemen

make tours of pleasure even in the prairies of the far west.

Omne ignotum pro magnifico might explain, in some measure, the romantic impressions so long existing regarding the Red men. The adage that "too much familiarity breeds contempt," discloses the secret of the later depreciatory descriptions of them.

They are represented now * as talkative and noisy; indulging in and delighted by buffoonery,—in fact, arrant gossips and jesters. They are described as brutal in their usage of their women, extravagantly fond of self-decoration, gamblers, gluttons, drunkards, greedy bargain-makers, audacious pilferers, and importunate beggars; as shrinking from bold and open attack, and delighting to pounce upon an unprepared and defenceless enemy.

I admit that most of these degrading traits do belong, in a certain degree, even to the tribes least altered by intercourse with White men.

But their talkativeness and buffoonery can be in a moment laid aside, and replaced by a natural dignity and graceful reserve.

The apparently harsh usage of their women generally goes no further than the exaction from

* See W. Irving's "Tour in the Prairies," Farnham's "Rocky Mountains," Murray's "Travels in America," &c.

them of a certain share of the labour: the man undergoes all the fatigues and privations of the chase; the instant he has entered his tent his labours cease, and all the duties of the camp are performed by the women. A division of toil almost precisely similar to this is rigidly observed in the fishing villages of Scotland; where the men's labours cease the instant the keel has touched the shore.

The pains the men take in self-decoration are attributable to their opinion that, to be fiercely painted and gaily plumed, are the marks of a brave warrior and good hunter.

And for their gluttony and drunkenness, it may be pleaded that sensual gratifications are the only ones known to them: that natural religion is ever powerless over savages, and that revealed religion has never been taught them.

That the "bravest of the brave" of the Indian warriors would shrink from the open and bold attack, which a White man would consider preferable to the suspense of a long and continued state of alarm and watchfulness, is undoubtedly true. In a great measure this arises from the opinion which has been instilled into them, that he is the greatest warrior who can most injure his enemy with the least exposure of himself. But in opposition to this seeming cowardice, it

may safely be alleged, that there is in a *Prairie* Indian, a stern yet passionate energy which a *pale face* can never rival. At the command of his chief, to gratify his own revenge, or to injure the enemies of his tribe, he will bear hunger, thirst, fatigue, and privation to an extent which appears almost beyond human endurance. He will track an enemy for weeks, follow him when he travels, watch him when he halts; and, true to his dogma, he will wait with the most untiring patience for the safest moment to strike the blow. If he fall into the hands of his enemy he resigns himself, without an entreaty for mercy, to his fate. If his death is to be a speedy one, he wraps his blanket round his head, and thus awaits the shot or the blow which is to finish his career; if he is to be exposed to a lingering death by torture, he will, at the stake, taunt and mock his tormentors: 'tis not of the frantic victims of the revolutionary guillotine of whom alone it might be said that "even the scaffold echoes to their jest."

For this endurance the youthful Indian of the Prairie tribes is prepared by long training, by the counsels of the elders, and by the example of the warriors of his tribe. No squire in the days of chivalry was more severely tried before he won the spurs of knighthood, than is a Prairie

youth ere he is admitted to the rank of a warrior. The last trial,—the confirmation,—is terrific. The novitiates are placed in the centre of a large tent, round which the elders and warriors of the tribe repose at ease. Here they are obliged to continue for three days and three nights in perpetual action; dancing their frantic war dances, while they shout their discordant cries, and sing their monotonous tunes. Not a moment's repose is allowed; neither drink nor food is permitted to be given them; and the only relief tolerated is, that their friends may, at distant intervals, moisten their lips with water, or a piece of fat: even this slight relief a candidate for high renown must reject.

The sufferings endured in this fearful ordeal are beyond description; and the scene near the conclusion is frightful. The young men whose powers have stood the test—(many of course fail)—are in a state of frantic delirium: their eyes are glazed and blood-shot; their lips are cracked and streaming with froth and gore; and their whole appearance is more that of a band of devils than of living men. Those who have safely passed through this ordeal have, it will be allowed, given a proof of their capacity for almost any amount of mental or physical endurance.

Such is the character and such are the habits

and training of the numerous tribes roving over the immense Prairie stretching north and south through the centre of America, for more than twenty degrees of latitude—the last refuge, rapidly encroached upon—of the independent and unchanged aborigines of the northern continent of America,

Similar in character and discipline, though differing in some of their habits, were the Mohawks, the Iroquois, the Narragansets, the Mohicans, and other once powerful tribes encountered by the White men on the Atlantic coasts and rivers. Bold was the stand they made against the encroachments of the pale faces! and, though they were at length conquered, their resistance was marked by many fierce struggles and many daring deeds.

"'Tis true that they have past away,
That noble race, and brave,—
That their light canoes have vanish'd
From off the crested wave,—
That 'mid the forests where they roam'd
There rings no hunter's shout."

Their habits differed in this—that the Atlantic tribes, living in a country whose trackless forests (now the site of many a fair city and thriving a town) abounded with deer, and whose waters (now navigated by hundreds of mammoth steamers) teemed with beaver and fish, had no in-

ducement to roam from the hunting-grounds which belonged to them; thus, though a nomad, they were a comparatively concentrated population. While the Prairie tribes, owners of countless bands of horses, which enable them alike to make distant forages into their enemies' country, and to pursue the vast herds of buffalo, whence they derive their principal subsistence, —are essentially a wandering and predatory race.

The Indians on the Northern Pacific sea-board (the Oregon country, as the Americans term it) bear a strong resemblance in habits and character to the almost extinct and forgotten Atlantic race. They also live in a country abounding with deer and fish: they are numerous, fierce, and resolute; divided into many tribes, which are in a state of continual hostility to each other, but all inclined, when an opportunity offers, to attack and massacre the White men.

But far different in character are the mild and harmless tribes spread over the immense tracts of wooded country, bounded on the south by the Canadas, on the east by Hudson's Bay, on the north by the barren grounds bordering on the Arctic Ocean, and extending on the west to the northern range of the Stony Mountains.

Among the thirty or forty tribes, speaking nearly as many different languages, living in this

cheerless region, there are, of course, gradations of character, some far exceeding others in energy and courage,—and even in the most timid tribe an individual of resolution and daring being sometimes found,—still, in describing them generally, mildness and timidity may be considered as the rule, and bravery the exception. Small parties of White men, and even single individuals, can pass entirely unarmed through most parts of this immense region. At the trading houses, often occupied by but two or three men, scarcely any precautions are used to prevent, or preparations made to resist, attack: and murders of white men have been, for the last twenty years, almost unknown.

Occupying countries where provisions are to be obtained only by much exertion—particularly for the many months over which, in that cold climate, the winter extends; obliged to live scattered in small bands or single families, the sole aim of their lives is to procure food for their daily use, and furs to exchange with the traders for the few European articles which they now require: in these pursuits alone are their energies called into play.

They are an abject and improvident race—with all the bad qualities, and few, if any, of the bright redeeming traits which marked the character of

the almost extinct Atlantic tribes, and which still mark that of the independent warriors of the Prairies.

THEIR CONDITION.

The powerful and warlike tribes which encountered the French on their first settlement in Canada, and which, after it had been for some time colonized, by a sudden and well-concerted attack massacred nearly all the inhabitants of the beautiful island on which the city of Montreal was built, have been, indeed, somewhat more fortunate than their more southern brethren who combated with the stern pilgrims of New England, and made treaties with the gentle Penn and his followers. Of those the beautiful and appropriate names still borne by many of the Rivers, Lakes, and States of the Union, are now the sole remaining memorials:

"Their memory liveth on those hills,
Their baptism on that shore,
The everlasting rivers speak
Their dialect of yore.
Old *Massachusets* wears it
Within his lordly crown,
And broad *Ohio* bears it
Amid his young renown.
Connecticut has wreath'd it
Where her quiet foliage waves,
And bold *Kentucky* breathes it hoarse
Through all her ancient caves."

The French colonists, notwithstanding this dreadful massacre, seem never to have felt towards their "red-browed brethren," the same animosity that was cherished by the New Englanders. The Canadian governors soon acquired the confidence of the Indian chiefs, whom they conciliated by gifts and courtesies; and thus obtained the aid of their tribes in the war which was so long waged between England and France on the western continent.

Two powerful and energetic ecclesiastical bodies, the Jesuits and St. Sulpicians, ardently engaged in the labour of converting the savages to the Catholic faith, and received from the French kings large grants of land in the outskirts of the colony, to enable them to provide not only for their own expenses, but also for the protection and support of their converts.

But though the aborigines of Canada were thus, from the first arrival on the continent of America of White men, much more favoured than those of the English provinces, and have also received, up to the present time, more protection and encouragement (not always, it is true, well directed) from the British government than has been accorded to their brethren in the United States, yet they, also, have disappeared rapidly before advancing civilization. A few wretched

villages are all the possessions that now belong to the descendants of the numerous tribes once sole occupiers of the banks of the mighty St. Lawrence; and the possession even of these has been preserved to them only by the fact of their being, by provincial law, prevented from selling their rights of property therein. Were it not for this prohibition, these their last refuges would be bartered to the White men for worse than a mess of pottage—for rum—that bane of all savage tribes.

Every visitor to Quebec pays also a visit to the neighbouring Indian village of *Lorette*, where he can stare at the natives, and lay in a stock of *mocassins* and other curiosities. No one can pass through the streets of Montreal without observing the *Caughnawaga* squaws, in their graceful costume, retailing articles of their manufacture, or wild fruit gathered in the mountains; and their drunken husbands staggering about under the influence of liquor, paid for by their hard labour in the *bateaux*, and on the timber-rafts of the St. Lawrence. The traveller who steams up the Ottawa will not fail to admire the (at a distance) beautiful Indian village of Lake of the Two Mountains, in which a few hundred Indians still congregate in summer; its old loop-holed church buildings (still occu-

pied by St. Sulpicians) embosomed in trees, under which councils have sat for centuries beyond record. Small communities of natives, reformed from their evil habits by the teaching and example of worthy men of the Wesleyan persuasion, are settled on the River Crédit, and on Lake St. Clair in Western Canada. A few wretched families of pure or mixed Indian blood are still to be found in the vicinity of the Rice Lake, at St. Regis on the St. Lawrence, and near the town of Three Rivers; and these are all the remnants of the aboriginal race now existing scattered among the million colonists of European birth or descent who occupy the banks of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa, and the shores of Lakes Erie and Ontario.

The upper country of the Ottawa and the shores of Lake Huron have not yet been taken possession of by colonists; but even there, woodhewers and other adventurers have penetrated, and the natives are rapidly decreasing in number. *The fire-water* works its usual effects among the *men;* while—to use the words of a late Canadian Governor*—whose romantic dispatches occasionally frighted the Colonial Office from its propriety,—nay, even awakened Lord Glenelg from

* Sir Francis B. Head.

his apathetic slumbers—"by some infernal powers the faces of the babies are becoming blanched!"

From this region came the Ojibiway Indians, lately exhibiting in London. I may remark regarding them, that to gull the English public—(gullible it was declared by Shakspeare to have been in *his* time,* gullible it still is)—they were decked out in costumes which they neither saw nor wore in their own country. The leather dresses and ornaments were those appertaining to the Prairie tribes, whose nearest haunt is distant at least one thousand miles from the Ojibiway country. Their *war*-dances, also, were merely antics carefully rehearsed for the occasion: of war they have no knowledge or experience, being a quiet demi-civilized race.

With all the other Indian tribes of British America (the few scattered over New Brunswick and Nova Scotia excepted) the Hudson's Bay Company alone has communication.

Its charter, it is true, gives it an exclusive right only to the trade of the country whose waters fall into Hudson's Bay: to which char-

* "A strange fish! Were I in England now (as once I was) and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver: there would this monster make a man—any strange beast there makes a man. When they would not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."—*Tempest.*

tered right the British Government has, under sanction of an Act of Parliament, added the country whose waters fall into the Arctic Ocean. In the unsurveyed tracts comprised within the territorial boundaries of the Canadas, it possesses no exclusive right; but over all this country, wherever Indians were to be found, the North-West Company had formed trading establishments, which were transferred to the joint concern, and are generally still maintained. Other parties have, indeed, on many occasions endeavoured to participate in the traffic of these places: but the ample resources of the Company enables it either to crush or to buy out its competitors.

Mildness and conciliation in the intercourse of its officers and servants with Indians of every tribe; an absence of interference in the quarrels of individuals, in the internal disputes of tribes, and in the wars which they may wage with one another, and an invariable rule of avenging the murder by Indians of any of its servants, blood for blood, without trial of any kind, are the three and only *principles* followed out by the Hudson's Bay Company in its transactions with the numerous inhabitants of the extensive territory under its control; and its sole *aim* is to derive the greatest possible revenue from that territory.

This aim is pursued with great inflexibility, and with a minuteness of attention to detail,

that would, at first glance, appear almost impracticable.

The prices paid to the natives for their furs are, in general, exceedingly small. Throughout the whole of the *protected* territories, the value of goods bartered for furs is, certainly, under one twentieth of the value of those furs in England. While in places not *protected*, in order to crush or prevent competition, even more than their full value has occasionally been given; and at the establishments on the outskirts of Canada, the prices permanently offered are from two to tenfold greater than those given to the natives of the regions over which an exclusive right of trade exists.

It is true that other expenses necessarily incurred in the prosecution of the trade, such as the wages of officers and servants, and the freight of shipping, add materially to the otherwise ridiculously small outlay of the Company; still, enough remains of what is 'wrung from the hard hands of *Indians*,' to pay dividends in London, which for many years made Hudson's Bay stock —notwithstanding the large capital sunk in the rivalry with the North-West Company—one of the best investments in England; and its present depreciation is owing, not to any material decline in the fur trade, but to losses incurred in a variety of schemes extraneous to the business, which alone its officers understand.

The entire value of all the furs and other articles, traded by the Company from Indians in all its territories and possessions, averages less than two hundred thousand pounds per annum. In one year it amounted to two hundred and eleven thousand pounds: and the nett profits for that year were declared at one hundred and nineteen thousand pounds!

I will not assert that the griping system by which these excessive gains are obtained, does really produce general misery among the natives subject to it. The *wants* of Indians in a region where buffalo or deer are to be found, as is the case over a large portion of the country, are limited to ammunition and a few articles of iron and tin, and their *desires* to the possession of a few trinkets. Where those animals are not to be found, fish from the lakes and rivers, and rabbits snared in the thick woods, are, in most places, almost unfailing resources; leaving the natives dependent upon the traders but for fishing-nets and lines, a few utensils, and a small supply of woollen clothing.

There are, however, some extensive tracts of country in which the means of subsistence are scanty in the extreme. In the region lying between Lakes Superior and Winipeg, the natives during winter can with difficulty collect enough of food to support life. In the country lying im-

mediately north of the Canadas, though fur-bearing animals are still comparatively numerous, and the trade consequently valuable, the poor Indians have, at all times, a hard fight against famine. In this tract of country fish is at all seasons scarce, and in winter the sole dependance of the natives for subsistence is placed upon rabbits (the most wretched food upon which to exist for any time that can possibly be conceived); and when these fail, the most frightful tragedies at times take place. Parents have been known to lengthen out a miserable existence by killing and devouring their own children.*

* Revolting and incredible as this may appear, it takes place occasionally among all the Indian tribes when starvation is imminent. My brother records thus:

A valid reason for leaving home.—"In a conversation with the Dogribs we afterwards learned that these mountain Indians are cannibals, and immediately upon any scarcity arising, cast lots for victims. Their fierce manners have been circumstantially detailed by an old man, who, while yet a stripling, fled from the tribe, and joined himself to the Dogribs, in consequence of finding his mother, on his return from a successful day's hunting, employed in roasting the body of her own child, his youngest brother."

I may, in like manner, instance the following as

A good reason for a separation.—An Indian couple, finding their provisions quite exhausted, lengthened out their existence by eating their children. Plenty again reigned with them; but the thoughts of the cannibal father still revelled in the delights of human flesh. In the exuberance of these thoughts he unwittingly muttered in his wife's hearing, "She is fat, and would be good to eat." The hint was not lost on the woman.

The climate and soil of these tracts are quite unfit for cultivation: but as the number of Indians inhabiting them is but small, and the distance but short to points whence provisions could be transported, a small share of the sum produced by the furs they kill, would suffice to prevent much misery and some most unnatural crimes.

I repeat that with the exception of the thinly peopled tracts I have described, and the extreme northern regions bordering on the barren grounds of the Arctic Ocean, which were the winter residences of those employed in Arctic discovery—the natives generally suffer but little from starvation (their great and only misery), notwithstanding their own great improvidence: and their *physical* condition would be but little altered by the adoption of a more liberal system of dealing with them.

Of their *moral* condition it is difficult—almost

As soon as he slept, she firmly bound his arms and legs, and then set off with all speed for the nearest trading station.

A strong incentive to industry.—An expert old hunter, accompanied by his wife and a young boy placed in their charge, went off in the autumn to their hunting-grounds. The old couple returned in the spring with an unusually large quantity of furs, and consequently had an extra allowance of grog. *In vino veritas.* In the talkativeness of intoxication the man declaimed thus:—"I'm a good hunter, a very good hunter; I have brought many skins to the fort; but if I had not killed the beavers they were on, my wife would have eaten me *as she ate the boy.*"

impossible—to give much information. To inquire into it has not fallen within the province of the trader—to ameliorate it has not been much attempted. Chastity, honesty, and truth, they have scarcely an idea of.

With the exception of those placed on the confines of civilization, and the few located at Red River colony, none have, until a very recent period, heard of Christianity, save perhaps accidentally from traders, whose lives but little accorded with its precepts.

Like all men in a savage state, they had among themselves an obscure idea of the existence of a good spirit and of a bad spirit (the last the most feared), a belief in a future life, and a vague tradition of a deluge.

This natural religion varied as widely among the different tribes, as did their characters, languages, and habits; but, to a certain extent, was existent in all: and their superstitions were equally varied.

This extensive field for missionary enterprise was unoccupied until the year 1839, when the attention of the Wesleyan Conference of Canada was directed towards it. Since then, ten or twelve zealous missionaries of that persuasion have been scattered over the wide "Indian Country,"—a large field for the exercise of Christian zeal and self devotion. May they be successful!

I cannot close this description of the character and condition of a much injured, much neglected, and *therefore* rapidly decreasing branch of the great family of mankind, without quoting the following remarks on the proper conduct of White men towards savages (of all regions) which were addressed to me by an associated body of French philanthropists—(far different, alas! is the general conduct of the French nation). "Nous pensons avec vous, Monsieur, que l'humanité en général peut et doit retirer un grand bénéfice des efforts combinés des philanthropes, des hommes d'état, d'expérience, et de bonne volonté, et que l'amélioration de sa condition physique et morale ne peut avoir lieu que par suite de leur association; les progrès de la civilization dépendent d'elle: et, commes vous le faites fort bien remarquer, c'est par l'observance rigoureuse des lois de l'honneur, de la justice, et l'application constante des préceptes de l'Evangile, code sublime de bienveillance réciproque, que les sauvages même savent comprendre, qu'il sera possible de les conquérir moralement."

THE END.

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